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J.R. Richard: The Pitcher Who Makes Hitters Tremble

SPORT Interview: Ken Stabler The Snake Bites Back



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Mark Ribowsky

THIS MONTH IN SPORT

With his penetrating story on Houston Astros righthander J. R. Richard, ("The Pitcher Who Makes Hitters Tremble," page 8), contributing editor Mark Ribowsky begins his second year as SPORT's most prolific writer. In 13 months he has produced 13 stories, surely a record for this magazine, and the consistent quality of each has been remarkable.

Readers have not failed to note Ribowsky's excellence, particularly his pieces on Jim Rice of the Red Sox, Don Shula of the Dolphins, "Baseball Superscouts Analyze the Playoff Teams," and "Behind the Cowboy Struggle to Reach Super Bowl XIII"—each of which elicited scores of letters. But his record for reader response was the "1979 Baseball Predictions" he tenaciously researched and wrote for our April issue.

In assessing the numerous baseball previews in magazines this spring, Jeffrey Polman, columnist for the Vermont newspaper *Vanguard Press*, wrote: "This year one national magazine is bolder and far more logical than the rest of the pack—SPORT. It contains a special 20-page baseball preview that's well worth your dollar, for these are the best scouting reports I've ever read. The team-by-team analysis is witty, economical and very brave. Instead of judging teams solely on their statistical merit or past histories, writer Mark Ribowsky quotes *real* baseball experts—scouts, baseball writers, general managers and players—and leaves out their names. The results are fresh, informative reading, and they prove one long-overlooked fact about baseball players: Their heads are often more important than their muscles."

That what's in an athlete's mind is at least as crucial to his performance as what's in his physical abilities has long headed SPORT's credo, and we ask all of our writers to dig as deeply as they possibly can to try to reveal the inner athlete. It is no easy task to get anyone to expose his deepest self.

"Delving into the psychological aspects of players can be exhausting," says Ribowsky, a 28-year-old journalism graduate of New York University. "But too many writers don't seem to bother with that, maybe because it entails so much work. I never make a psychological judgment on a player without talking to a lot of people who know the guy. Several of J. R. Richard's teammates, for example, told me they thought he was beset by a fear of failure because he's so big and because he'd always been so successful at every sport he tried. They didn't know if he could handle failure—which every ballplayer has to do regularly—and cited J. R.'s reactions to crisis in earlier years. He's always had the great fastball, but that wasn't enough for him—he wanted to throw changeups. Of course, hitters would *pay* him to see a changeup now, because they sure can't see his fastball. He got off to a great start this season despite 12 wild pitches in six games. He gave up only 17 walks and he was 4-0. This could be a *monster* season for Richard if he stays with his heat and receives some support. He's a strange dude because of his brittle ego, but when he's relaxed he's a dynamite guy to be with."

Ribowsky's favorite player to be with is Jim Palmer (May "SPORT Interview"). "He was brutally honest about everything—including himself. All too few athletes have enough perspective to laugh at themselves. Palmer does. And he was so cooperative that, when I had some followup questions, he returned my call at midnight and we chatted for three hours. Still, I've come across a number of cooperative athletes lately, including one on the baseball preview who, when I phoned, said he was in the midst of a close encounter with a devoted female fan." Ribowsky chuckled. "The guy talked to me for an hour."

Berry Stainback

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SPORT LETTERS

PITCHING PICKOFFS

How come the Red Sox's Jim Rice didn't participate in "The Hitters Rate the Top Pitchers" (May)? If, as Stephen Hanks said, "the pitcher's rating panel consisted of hitters who combine the ability to hit for average and power," then Rice definitely should have been included. Last year Rice hit 46 home runs, had 139 RBI's and a .315 average. If this does not fulfill Mr. Hanks' standards, what does?

Joseph Petrosinelli
Cranston, R.I.

The Expos' Ross Grimsley wasn't rated high enough. He has everything a pitcher needs to win that kind of poll!

Tim Jacobson
Watertown, S.D.

Why didn't the New York Mets' Pat Zachry make the top ten? Before he got hurt last season, he seemed to be one of the best pitchers in the National League. Where did he place in the ratings?

Danny Kelly
Armonk, N.Y.

Author's reply: Many readers asked where their favorite pitcher placed. Here's a list of pitchers ranking 11 through 20: A.L.: Nolan Ryan, Angels; Paul Splittorff, Royals; Mike Torrez, Red Sox; Larry Gura, Royals; Dave Goltz, Twins; Ed Figueroa, Yankees; Dennis Martinez, Orioles; Jim Slaton, Brewers; Larry Sorenson, Brewers; Chris Knapp, Angels. N.L.: Don Sutton, Dodgers; John Candelaria, Pirates; Bob Forsch, Cardinals; Pat Zachry, Mets; Randy Jones, Padres; Don Robinson, Pirates; Bob Knepper, Giants; Craig Swan, Mets; Randy Lerch, Phillies; John Montefusco, Giants.

—Stephen Hanks

HAYES HASHOVER

Richard O'Connor wrote a fine article on "The Anguish of Elvin Hayes" (May), but I think that Bob Dandridge should get the same amount of credit. If it weren't for Dandridge, the Bullets wouldn't be half as good as they are right now.

Pete Romano
Staten Island, N.Y.

Why don't you leave Elvin Hayes alone? All you do is put him down. Granted, he used to gun it a lot, but now he's a complete player. For a guy who's scored over 20,000 points in his career, you could have been more positive.

T. Meeker
Hamilton, O.

PALMER PAN

I beg to differ with Jim Palmer's reference to Mickey Rivers and Bucky Dent as "average players" ("The SPORT Interview," May). Rivers is a fine all-round ballplayer, and as for perhaps the only A.L. shortstop with better defensive skills is Palmer's teammate, Mark Belanger.

George Brown
New Haven, Conn.

GOOD POPCORN

Earl McRae's article on Mike Pal-



Mike Palmateer's confidence and daring make him one of hockey's best goalies.

mateer ("The Popcorn Kid," May) was brilliant. He did an excellent job using Palmateer as the perfect example of how a goalie's mental attitudes, habits and confidence affect performance on the ice.

Daniel Smolarek
Buffalo, N.Y.

All Mike Palmateer needs to be the best goalie in hockey is a little support from his defense and five other Maple Leafs on the ice for at least half the game!

Dale Campbell
Fort Wayne, Ind.

LAUDING LOUIS

Tim Tyler's article, "A Tribute to Joe Louis" (May), was superb. I have idolized Louis since he threw his first punch. As President Franklin Roosevelt once said, "Joe Louis is a credit to our country."

Mrs. Dwight Taylor
Oakland, Ma

PREDICTION POP-UPS

The Montreal Expos section of your "1979 Baseball Predictions" (April) dis-

turbed me. Whoever said the Expos' failure had to do with "... living in a foreign city," was copping out! If the players can't adapt, it's their fault, not ours. We love our Expos, whether they come in first or last in the pennant race.

Holly Cullen
LaSalle, Quebec, Canada

It matters not whether Mark Ribowsky's predictions on the major-league pennant races pan out. The hard-headed and insightful comments of baseball's insiders were a breath of fresh air. I'd appreciate similar treatment of pro football and basketball.

Dave Panckeri
Nuremberg, Pa.

Editor's reply: Mr. Ribowsky is currently working on an expert analysis of the National Football League.

MORE ROSE PROSE

After reading Marty Bell's interview with Pete Rose (April), I can understand why he has ridiculed the Reds so much; he was cruelly mistreated by them.

Frank Berger
Lakewood, Colorado

That show off! The Reds' organization made Rose what he is today. The Phillies sure paid a big price for that big mouth. He never deserved to be on the cover of your fine magazine.

Mark Gdowik
Reading, Pa.

DAMN YANKEES

The more I read of "The Bronx Zoo" (April), the more sympathetic my feelings became toward George Steinbrenner. It becomes quite evident that Steinbrenner is more than the money behind the Yankee revival; he is the brains and guts as well.

William C. Singleman
Newburgh, N.Y.

CHAI LIFE

As much as I enjoyed your article on the New York Islanders' "Killer Instinct" (April), I have to point out an obvious mistake. In Hebrew, "Chai" does not mean peace, it means eighteen and life. "Shalom" means peace.

Marvin Ira Charles Seigfried
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Editor's reply: We stand corrected.

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Peter Accetta
New York City, New York



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THIS PITCHER MAKES HITTERS TREMBLE

When towering, glowering Astro J.R. Richard throws his wild and woolly 96-mph fastball, batters bail out—briskly

By MARK RIBOWSKY

James Rodney Richard, the Houston Astros' brutally intimidating righthander, is on his hands and knees as I greet him in the Cocoa Inn parking lot. It's a cool, windy late-March morning and Richard, who has been helping teammate Wilbur Howard fix Howard's camper truck, whirls around with a wrench in his hand and rises slowly, majestically, frighteningly, until he towers 6 feet 8 inches above the earth, higher than anyone in baseball. Looking down at me, he asks, "How long you been here?" I tell him a couple of hours. He grins. "You been here a long time," he says, referring to the microscopic joys of Cocoa, Fla.

Richard is decked out in gold sneakers, green T-shirt, blue jeans and matching cap and a long, purple cape that could double as a tent for an average-sized man. But he looks and sounds tired. His long, gaunt face is drawn and there are circles under his sloped eyes. The voice—deep and tinged with a slight drawl—is barely audible at times. His manner is diffident, but I pass it off to the early hour, since I had heard that he was a big, friendly guy who knew he was good and apparently didn't mind saying so. And why not? Coming into this year he had won 79 games and lost only 54, toiling for a team that has played .500 ball only once in the four full years he has been a regular starter. Richard has won more games the last three years (56) than any other righthander in the league. Last year, he became the first National League righthander since 1900 to strike out over 300 batters.

Richard is the kind of pitcher that does things in abundance. He strikes out a lot of batters, walks a lot (141 last season, second in the big leagues only to Nolan Ryan's 148) and scares everybody to death a lot. Joe Morgan once said that Richard was the only pitcher he's ever feared *physically*. The fear is, of course, well-founded: He threw no less than 12 wild pitches—and a record six in one game—in his first four starts this season. But Richard can also throw his 96-mph fastball accurately. In the April game in which he

threw six wild pitches, for example, he walked just four. And in his first 40 $\frac{2}{3}$ innings of work this season, he walked only 17 while striking out 44 and gave up only ten runs in winning four of six starts (two no-decisions), helping the Astros get off to a surprising early lead in their division. Richard will hit the symbolic plateau of baseball superstardom—the million-dollar contract—next year. And if he ever pitches for a team that can consistently score as many runs as it allows, he might even have the 30-win season he keeps saying he should have. All of which were wonderful reasons why I expected Richard to be peacefully content and happy to see me.

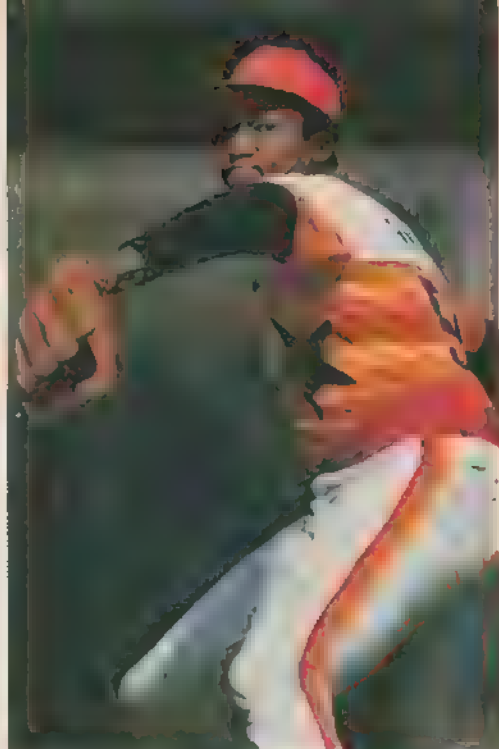
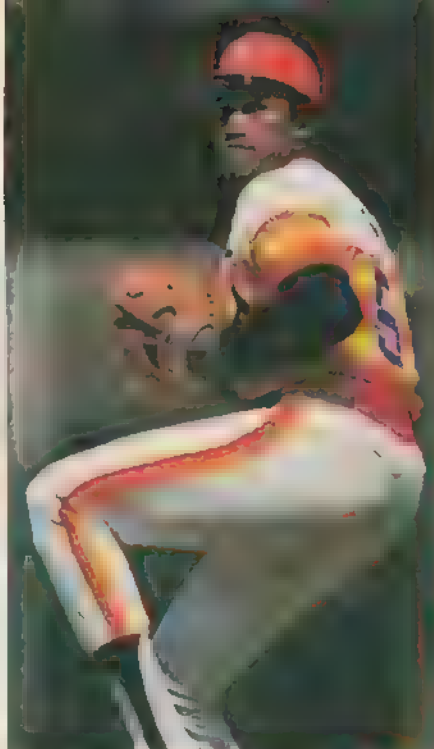
As Richard screws a trailer hitch back onto the truck bumper, he explains that "after the game yesterday some of the guys set up a birthday party for me. They couldn't do it a couple of weeks ago [when he turned 29] so they did it last night." A little laugh. "It wasn't bad, either." I ask about a curfew. "We don't have one." A wan grin. "If we did, I would've established a new one last night."

The truck fixed, Richard calls back to Howard, "I'm gonna go for some breakfast. Meet you in the restaurant." Moments later, he plops into the motel coffee shop with a loud grunt. He orders three fried eggs and hash browns and whispers something to a blond waitress that sets her giggling.

I ask if he'd care to predict a 30-win season again. He answers between bites and interminably long pauses. "I never said I was *gonna* win 30. I said I'd *like* to win 30. I *could* win 30. I set my goals higher than everyone else because I'm ambitious, I don't wanna be satisfied just being *good*. Too many people do that, not me. My goals correspond to my ability and my determination, and they're both very high. But to win 30 I'd have to be with the right club."

"Are you saying the Astros are the *wrong* club for you?"

"No. . . by the right club I mean one that does things right, and that can be any team. We haven't done that yet, we haven't won games we should've won, haven't played up to our potential. Maybe some emotion has been lacking on the part of a few individuals. But this



Richard executes his frightening delivery (clockwise from top). Says one scared batter: "I have a family I think of."

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Richard

year we have some ambitious kids."

Richard lost eight games last year in which the Astros didn't score more than two runs. When the numbers are brought up, he shrugs again. "Can't do nothin' about that. Uh-uh, I'm not angry about it. I got my job, the rest got theirs."

"Your contract runs out next year. Any thoughts about going elsewhere?"

"Uh uh. I got an attorney—Tom Reich, the guy Dave Parker has. He'll think about it for me, talk with the club, do whatever he has to do. But right now I like it here, I'm comfortable, happy."

Just then, Howard, still in the dirty gray sweatshirt he was wearing before, sits down at the table. I'd been told that he was Richard's closest friend on the club, so I ask him if he has any stories about the big righthander. A slight, blank-faced man with a thick mustache, Howard doesn't look up from the menu as he mumbles, "No. . . no stories. We do things. . . but we're entitled to privacy."

Watching me get nowhere with Howard, Richard perks up a bit. A slight grin makes his eyes squint. "Wilbur is kinda quiet," I say. "Hah, you should see him at night when he's got a jug of Ripple in his veins," Richard says. "You can't turn ol' Chilli off." Howard just stares.

Fifteen minutes later, the three of us pile into Richard's Thunderbird and ride to Cocoa Stadium where the Astros will work out and then play the Boston Red Sox. On the way, Richard turns up the car stereo to ear-puncturing level.

When the Astros come out of the lockerroom—which Bill Virdon, the jovial-as-a-crutch manager, has ruled off-limits to the press—and do calisthenics, Richard begins emitting loud, falsetto cackles, whines and screeches that convulse the other Astros in laughter. Then, during stretching exercises, he teases outfielder Jose Cruz with Spanish-sounding double talk.

The Astros then peel off into pairs and play catch. Richard takes this drill so seriously that he alternately throws behind his back and between his legs. As I sit in the dugout watching this comic relief, Enos Cabell, the skinny but brilliant third baseman, comes in and sits down. I ask him if J.R. is always this frivolous in practice and he laughs. "Oh yeah, Jay likes being Jay a whole lot, he likes people to know he's around. I mean, Jay works hard, real hard, when he has to. He just kills himself. I've never seen a pitcher run so long or pitch as much batting practice. In Philadelphia last year, he pushed himself like a dog for nine innings in 120-degree heat. He came in and threw up all over the dugout a couple times, he couldn't move after the game—but he wouldn't come out. Now [spring training]

you just try and have some fun."

When the drills end, Richard ambles slowly to the mound to pitch batting practice. He begins throwing easily, but the ball still pops into the catcher's mitt with the crack of a cherry bomb. Gradually, Richard's motion fills out, becoming more deliberate and fluid. After his no-windup, step-back start, his left leg kicks higher. His back arches and his body jerks to the left on his delivery so he can throw from almost directly overhead. His arm seems to sweep all the way up from the ground and his stride lengthens with each pitch. Richie Hebner (now with the New York Mets) once said that he could almost smell Richard's breath when he pitched. I can see why: When he releases the ball at a point at least two feet in front of his head and comes off the mound like a huge bear, he looks as though he's right on top of the plate. The ball is a little white blur emerging for a split second out of a massive shadow.

"I'll tell you something," Bob Watson, the veteran first baseman tells me at the cage. "He doesn't pump in batting practice, but you'll still never get me to go in there against him. I've never taken batting practice against him and I never will. I have a family to think of."

Reliever Joe Sambito, hearing the remark, walks over. "This is the truth," he says. "I know a Dodger player who told me a lot of Dodgers have come up with fake injuries rather than face J.R.—and you wouldn't believe the names. I know for myself, I see guys who never swing at the first pitch *always* swing at it against J.R. They take charity swings, just to keep from staying in there. That fear is such a help for a pitcher, and with Jay, it means that he has an extra half-foot of error space on his pitches that no other pitcher has; he can make more mistakes because nobody is digging in."

Watson picks up a bat and says, "I was talking with Dave Parker recently about J.R. before a game. He said you have a tendency to want to swing quicker against him because of that fear. You know that you can't expect anything other than a fastball—the brain wouldn't let you because of the fear. That's why it's gotta be galling to a guy when Jay rips that slider of his in."

"Because it comes at you as fast as the fastball," Sambito says. "Nobody throws a breaking ball as hard as J.R., and the bitch of it is that he's controlling the damn thing more all the time."

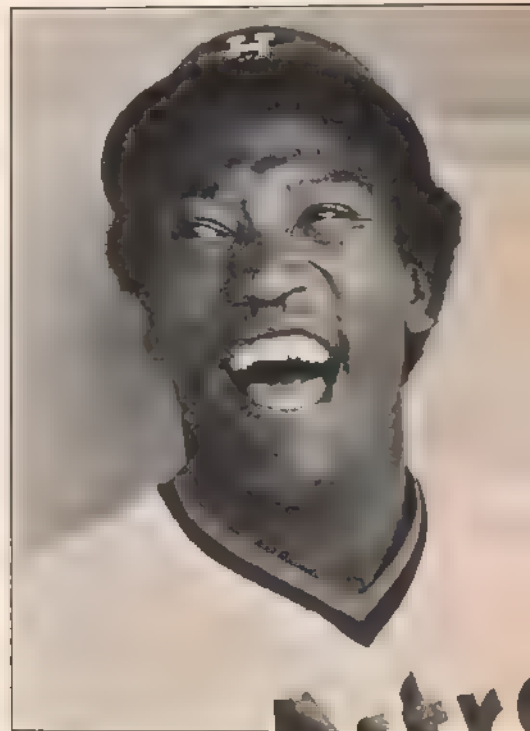
"I was amazed last year that he walked only one guy in like four or five games," Watson agrees. "I mean, he struck out 303, but it could've been 403 easy. So many guys just got a piece of it with two strikes, hitting defensively."

Even now, throwing batting practice, Richard's intensity is intimidating. His mouth seems cemented shut in determination, the corners turned down in a kind

of defiant scowl. His heavy breathing sounds like a guttural growl. Sweat pours from his skin as though there's a hose inside him. And yet as Watson and Sambito continue their symposium at the batting cage, this imposing giant begins to seem more human.

Cabell joins us and says, "I R isn't your most aggressive person. If he was, he might be even better, because he sometimes gets in trouble by losing some of his concentration."

Watson stops swinging his bat to say, "Yeah—with Bob Gibson you knew if you didn't get him early you never would. But J.R., he doesn't seem to be saying, 'I want it.' He doesn't get stronger, mentally tougher, in the late innings, and sometimes in the early innings, if he gets in trouble. . . . Yeah, I know he looks like



J.R. jokes with teammates, but says, "I'm not involved with many people."

he's intense as hell, and he is, most of the time. But who knows? Maybe *that's* a problem. He's up there so high that it's tough to keep up that level of concentration. And when he gets in trouble sometimes, he gets too uptight, headstrong; he loses his cool, throws too hard and winds up walking everybody.

"But there are other times when he's the opposite, when he seems to wander. He'll give up those 0-2 hits or throw changeups to the pitcher or a .200 hitter. That's when you gotta go over and lay down the law. But he can be stubborn. Last year, [San Diego shortstop] Ozzie Smith got a lot of hits off slow stuff and I told J.R., 'Come on, the man is two-feet tall—blow him down.' But he'd say, 'No, I'm pitching him right.' And he may have been, but if you have a J.R. Richard fast-

Richard

ball and slider, you don't fool around. He wants to be the best so much that he thinks it means being a 'complete pitcher'—which he already is in his own way. He's a sensitive guy; he reads things, hears things. I wish he'd say 'the hell with 'em' and just throw."

"I'm getting the impression that Richard has a lot of conflicting emotions," I say. "I would expect the intensity, the desire. But not the insecurity."

Watson grins. "Every pitcher should be so insecure. I mean, we're talking about a *super* pitcher here, and any faults are minor."

"Still, you gotta understand that Jay's a very basic guy," Cabell says. "He's a country boy, a Bible reader. He's not used to pressure or criticism or people messing with him. He's, uh, naive, a little."

"Also," Watson adds, "think of it this way: If you were 6-8 and had his fastball, wouldn't it be tough trying to live up to your potential? Hey, J.R. will *never* be able to feel like he's made it all the way."

After the practice session Richard showers, then goes back to the motel to fetch his fishing gear. He plops down on his unmade bed to wait for Howard.

Richard still hasn't really opened up. He seems distracted, and his sentences keep trailing off. I ask if there's something on his mind.

A long pause. "Well, I'll tell you. I'm skeptical of reporters. I don't like talking to them."

I remind him that when I'd called him the week before, he'd told me to come down to Cocoa. "I know I did," he says. "But *you* asked to do it. And I'm not stopping you. Ask me what you want. I'm just saying I'm careful, because I've seen reporters write personal things, use you to get at other people. That's why I'm not involved with many people, even on the club; I don't wanna cause problems for anyone so I keep to myself."

As Howard comes into the room with his fishing pole and we all get back in the car, I wonder just how Richard will respond to difficult questions with this attitude. I'm not optimistic. But then, as we ease through palm tree-lined streets, he suddenly begins talking more freely and emotionally. "Reporters sometimes treat us as dogs," he says. "They don't wanna help us, but hurt us. I don't wanna step on anybody. I'm no different than, uh, a hitchhiker or the guy who picks up the garbage cans. We're all the same in the eyes of God. Like, today I'll give the fish I catch to the people in the kitchen. They do things for us, so I'll do things for them. We gotta help each other. People have to help themselves, forget about governments because they're antipeople."

Richard parks in a quiet, upper-class section of town and he and Howard walk through the front yard of a white frame house to a lake surrounded by private homes and moored yachts. "Ooo-wee! Water's up, Chilli!" Richard shouts as he sits on a cement edge of the lake and throws some bread into the water. Looking around the lake, he squeals, "God-damn! They're still in there. Yesterday them bass were jumpin' outa the water into my lap." Almost on cue there's a pull on his line and Richard screeches, "Ooo-wee! I got one, boy." He pulls in a plump bass. Moments later he gets another and screams, "This one's Tom Dempsey—a record-breaker!"

When the action slows down, Richard says, "I come here to sit and think, reflect on the beauty of God's earth and my place in it. I need to make peace with myself because the world gets too hairy, too complex for me."

After a little while I ask if he thinks he's the best pitcher in the game. "I don't ever say that, I let others say it for me," he says. "But, to me, I'm in the game to be

"I spent a lot of time in front of a mirror trying not to look like a big, awkward kid"

No. 1. I can't be satisfied with less. Being No. 1 is fantastic, it's the greatest thing in the world. Not being No. 1 is being an ass." His words are coming slowly, but his voice is slightly elevated in tone. "I feel I'm close to that point, if not already there, because my domination instinct is greater than most people's. That's the same instinct as Russia and the U.S. have in the arms race, except I don't use it to hurt anyone. I want to dominate baseball, not people. A lot of people want that, but they don't want to put in the work, to suffer, to sacrifice to do it. I do. I run more than any pitcher has *ever* run. I do two miles most every day in under ten minutes. I kill myself. Being the best requires that. I've made that pact with God and myself."

I mention the hot-weather game in Philadelphia Cabell had talked about. "I coulda killed myself that day, you know that? The doctor told me. I lost 20 pounds, man. If I wasn't in great condition, I could've had a stroke. Another time I threw 182 pitches, which no other pitcher could do. My arm felt numb. But I had to do it; it was a test of my dedication. Physical pain can't stop you if your mental outlook is strong. The main thing is, I'm independent. I listen to my own commands."

The roots of Richard's independence—

and the inner workings of his psyche—may be found in his past. Born in a tiny speck of Louisiana called Vienna—"It was a mostly white little town; they didn't know me, didn't *want* to know me, so I always said I was from Ruston after I made something of myself"—his father was a sawmill operator. "The family [one sister, four brothers] didn't need money from me but I worked all the time—because I *wanted* to. I just didn't want to be told what shoes I should wear, I wanted to buy my own. The greatest feeling of my life was getting my first bike because I could ride out to the country and play ball in the cow pastures. Then I got my first car—an old four-door, blue Biscayne that smoked like hell. It meant I could go where I wanted, a world all my own." A wide grin. "And a back seat."

Richard played basketball and football as well as baseball at Lincoln High School in Ruston—the same town that produced Terry Bradshaw and Bert Jones. "I could've made the pros in either of those. I can do *anything* in the realm of sports, always could. In my senior year I threw seven touchdowns and ran for seven more. I averaged 35 points and 25 rebounds. My ERA was 0.00 and I hit about 20 homers. I mean, I was *devastating*. I had all kinds of scholarship offers—Oral Roberts, Oklahoma, LSU. I could've gone to Grambling easy, it was right around the corner—but I wouldn't have because every black kid from Ruston went there. But I talked with an attorney and he said to take the money the Astros were waving around, that nothing was guaranteed four years from then."

Richard, the Astros' No. 1 pick in the June '68 free-agent draft, signed for a \$50,000 bonus and went to the low minor leagues, a 19-year-old iceberg with a wild and crazy arm and little else. Richard struck out 71 batters in 56 innings his first year in the minors. He also walked 52 and had a 6.59 ERA. "I saw him in West Virginia that year, when I was with the Oriole organization," says Cabell, who has joined the fishing group. "I saw him throw a ball right through a batting cage. I dropped my bat and went home."

After some polishing, Richard was brought up to Houston late in '71. In his first appearance he beat the Giants and struck out 15 to tie a first-appearance record. The next spring, however, he failed to make the club, and was brought up again only late in the year. The next two seasons he was brought up only in the middle of the year. The biggest disappointment was '74—coming off a 6-2 (75 strikeouts in 72 innings) stint with the club the year before.

"I hurt my shoulder in a motorcycle accident before spring training in '74," Richard says, "but they weren't gonna keep me anyway. They had too many white guys to bring up yet." That was something Richard said loudly and often

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Richard

back then. Now, he goes on, "Well, it's old hat now, so I'll let sleeping dogs lie. But it's known—Jimmy Wynn and Joe Morgan went through it, too."

Bob Watson, when asked about the subject, later says, "Racism was possibly a factor at the start, but I can't buy that they'd keep a super pitcher down for four years because of it. I was here, Wynn was, Morgan was, Don Wilson and Cesar Cedeno were. I thought he should've been moved up earlier, but the fact is, J.R. needed a hell of a lot of work those years."

That part, at least, is true. "Until about '74 or '75, J.R. didn't have the finesse he'd need over a full season," says Astro pitching coach Mel Wright. "Smoke'll get you past the league maybe once—never twice. I mean, even in '73, he was throwing too hard, striding too much, throwing three different kinds of change-ups—without throwing any of them right. And he was possibly the worst fielder I ever saw." Wright and, for a while, former pitching coach Hub Kittle made Richard a pet project. They drew lines on the mound to stop his stride, took away his windup to lessen the chance of throwing that big body off balance, worked on his form and concentration and polished his fielding.

Whatever the reasons for his captivity in the minors, Richard made the Astros for good in '75. The next season, Virdon's first full one, Richard went 20-15 with a 2.75 ERA and 214 strikeouts in 291 innings. That was followed by a near carbon copy, 18-12, 2.97, 214-strikeout year.

That Richard could blame racism for his not coming up sooner, however, was not out of character. Says Cabell: "He's very sensitive to racial conditions. He sees racism when other people don't. The other day, we were in a drugstore and the lady said, 'Can I do something for you boys?' I think it was just her vocabulary, her way of speaking, but Jay got mad and said, 'I'm not a boy, I'm a man.' She got real embarrassed. . . . I was kinda uncomfortable myself."

Richard explains, "Yeah, I am sensitive to racism. I know it exists but I still can't accept it. . . . Yeah, I put that lady straight—hey, I know for a fact that there are people of both colors who like me only because I'm who I am. I'll go back to Ruston and the old guys'll come up and say, 'What's happenin', J.R. Superstar?' Then they'll ask for a handout—guys I knew as a kid will do that, too; guys who let their lives be destroyed by drugs or laziness. I tell 'em, 'If you can't make nothin' of yourself, don't come to me.' It's just sick to see this happen. But people are sick. Twenty years after I quit, I probably wouldn't be able to get a job in

Houston. They'll forget me, see me as just another black guy."

Richard is still speaking softly and deliberately, but his words are more revealing now. I decide to ask again about the free-agent possibilities, saying that he could demand a windfall as one of baseball's best pitchers. That's when he surprises me. "Do you think I am?" he asks, looking straight at me for the first time. I say without a doubt and he responds, "Thank you." Then he says, "Maybe I was a little wrong before. Sure, I've thought about it. I figure they'll have to come up with at least \$600,000 a year to keep me here. But thinking about it is pressure—that I have to be great for the money—so I try not to. Not that I'm crazy about money. I'm not. I don't have cars and jewelry and things. Happiness means more to me than money and things. Peace of mind. My wife and [five] kids, being close to them. All of these things would come into play in signing a contract. I look at Reggie Jackson. Is he really happy? I don't know if I could pitch if I wasn't happy."

"Twenty years after I quit...they'll forget me, see me as just another black guy"

"Even now, the pressures of being J.R. Superstar, they're tough. People make demands, you have to deal with more people." Another pause. "I think if I got a big deal, I'd stay away from ads and appearances and like that. More people, more pressures. Who needs it?" A longer pause. "But I can handle the pressures, because I can adapt to any situation. I'm big, macho, I talk good, I've done a few movies [one was a bit part in *The Bad News Bears Breaking Training*]."

The group gathers up its fishing gear as sundown covers the lake. Cabell gets into Richard's car and, riding back to the motel, is terrified by Richard's breakneck pace. "You drive me crazy, man!" Cabell yells when Richard rounds a corner on two wheels.

Richard grins. "I was on a Suzuki 750 and swerved to miss a dog. I went rolling into an intersection and a car just missed my head. I don't ride them things any more. I'm too big for 'em. But cars? Any thing goes, especially if it ain't mine."

I return to baseball, asking him about the charge that he's sometimes not tough enough with weak hitters because of a lack of concentration. His mood grows dark again. "People who say those things like reporters—don't know

about pitching, don't know my pitches, my feelings about a game. The only reason I used to have rhythm problems is because I was too intense and didn't think of what I should be doing. Now I'll step off and think about the hitter."

"I know when he's doing that," Cabell says. "He pulls his cap from his neck to his head and jerks it down. Looks like he's tearing off his head."

"Hub Kittle told me to do that, get in a routine when I think. Yeah, he helped me, and so did Mel Wright. I spent a lot of time in front of a mirror trying not to look like a big, awkward kid." A chuckle. "That's when I saw how mean I looked. I scared me. But, mostly my development has been on my own. I like mixing up my speeds, being a complete pitcher."

I look at Cabell. He's already smiling. "J.R. has only one problem," Cabell says. "He doesn't protect us. When he's wild, he's wild high or low or way-outside—not in a guy's ear."

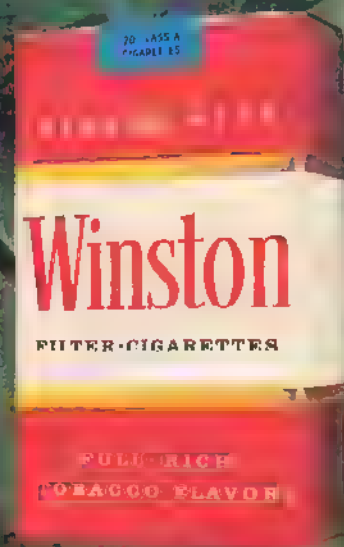
"Yeah, you're right, I don't do that," Richard says. "I probably should, but I'm afraid I might kill somebody."

By now, Richard is in an almost jocular mood as he careens through the streets of Cocoa with his music blasting. At one stop light, he rolls down the window and says, "How are you this lovely evening?" to an elderly white couple. They leave tire marks the instant the light turns green. Richard cackles. "I love scaring these old folks down here. A big, black dude rolls a window down and they think a rifle's coming out."

Sitting next to him, I shake my head thinking of the wild changes in mood I have seen today. Richard is a jumble of contrary emotions—a religious zealot with a chillingly cold opinion of mankind in general. And yet I can't help but think that Richard would find more of the inner peace he covets if he were just six inches shorter. As Watson had said, it must be scary trying to live up to an unlimited promise. Still, Richard has a rare gift and an ability to learn. He also has time to lose his insecurities. He may have lost them already. Two weeks after this day, he would throw those six wild pitches against the Dodgers—a record made possible by a combination of Richard's incredible slider and a young catcher who had never caught him before. The moment to remember would come in the sixth inning after Reggie Smith had singled, stolen second and gone to third on a hit by Steve Garvey, leaving runners on second and third with no one out.

In the past, Richard might have cracked under such a situation. This time, he merely reared back and struck out Ron Cey, Dusty Baker and Rick Monday to end the inning. His sliders were breaking three feet down into the dirt. Future historians may mark the moment as the one when Richard became as convinced of his invincibility as everyone else. ■

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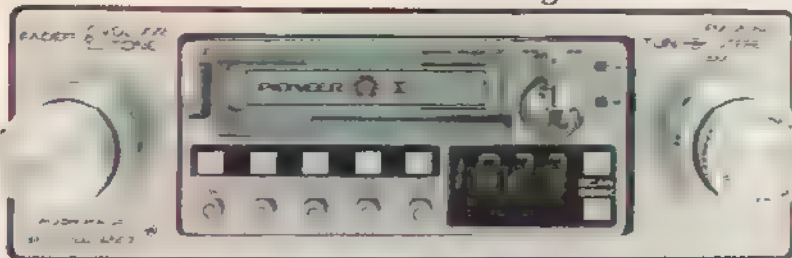
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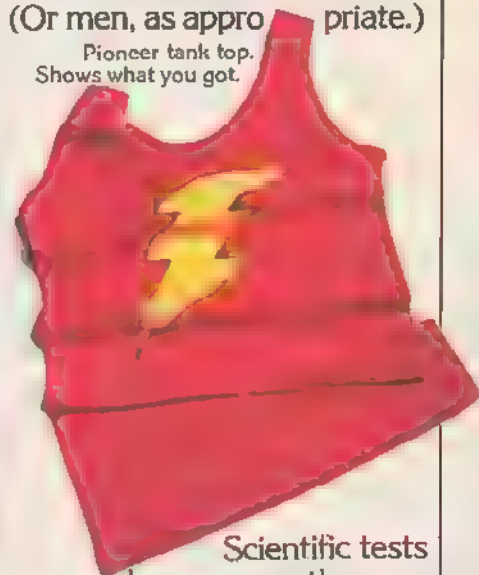
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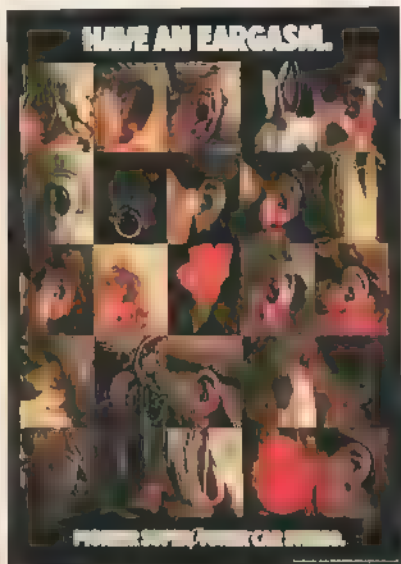
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HOTTEST GLOVE AT THE HOT CORNER

Graig Nettles has the quickest mitt in the Bronx Zoo, but he's even faster with his wit—just ask George Steinbrenner

By JOE DONNELLY

A driving April rain beat incessantly on the two buses transporting the Yankees to Baltimore, their first road stop of the season. The springtime roadbed refurbishing on the New Jersey Turnpike must be coming a little late this year—the driver in the lead bus keeps hitting potholes and cracks left over from the freeze and thaw of winter.

"Hey, Killer, are you sure this is smoother than flying?" Graig Nettles called from the back of the bus. Bill Kane, the Yankee traveling secretary, whom the players call Killer, chuckled up front. He didn't have to look back, he knew the source. And he knew there would be other tedium-relieving one-liners, because coming up with them is what Graig Nettles does best—outside of playing third base and driving in runs.

"Thurman's flying, why can't we?" and "Hey, Killer, if we're good, can we fly to Chicago?" were other contributions along the way. Nettles was settling into the routine of another season, and certainly happier than he had been a few hours earlier at a New York Hilton welcome-home luncheon for the Yankees.

That was one game he didn't play last year. "If they want somebody to play third base, they got me," said Nettles. "If they want somebody to go to luncheons, they should sign George Jessel." He received two telegrams of thanks from Jessel. He

also heard from the club. It fined him \$500.

This time Nettles showed up at the luncheon dressed as the epitome of the company man, resplendent in a three-piece suit and wearing a tie. What he couldn't put a rein on were his emotions. "We've been away from our families," he said. "This is an off day. We'd rather be spending the time before traveling to Baltimore with our families." Asked if he regarded it as arm-twisting by Yankee owner George Steinbrenner that he was there, Nettles said, "No, wallet-twisting."

It is a trying relationship between these two strong-willed men, Steinbrenner usually being contemptuous of any employee who doesn't offer him his mind as well as his body. Their latest skirmish developed this past spring training when a writer from *Newsweek* asked for a comment from the third baseman on his employer, saying, "We're planning to put George Steinbrenner on the cover."

"Jeezus Christ!" exclaimed Nettles, who followed up with a terse "no comment." While his editorial disapproval had nothing to do with Steinbrenner being dropped as a cover subject, the





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Nettles

magazine did scuttle the idea. However, word of the exchange filtered back to the owner and he summoned Nettles in for a spring-training visit in the manager's office in Fort Lauderdale.

"He told me he didn't appreciate my reaction to a reporter from a national magazine," Nettles said. "I'm sure we'll be at odds as long as I'm here because a lot of things he does I don't like. If somebody asks me about them, I'll tell them."

There is one ingredient Steinbrenner respects in Nettles: talent. "I'm not one of his favorite people and he's not one of mine," the owner said, "but he can play and he plays hard even when he's hurt. You have to respect him for that."

This is the season Nettles will turn 35, but any erosion of talent has yet to show. The first game in Baltimore was a miniature restaging of last October, when he began to turn the World Series around with a succession of critical and incredible plays in the third game. All the moves of the consummate third baseman—the dive, the quick feet to bring him upright, the accurate throwing arm blend into an art form of how to play the game defensively. If the plays he made against the Orioles were any less dramatic than the ones against the Dodgers, blame it on April.

"He's been doing that against my ballclub ever since he's been in the big leagues," Earl Weaver said. "What he did in the World Series and tonight didn't surprise me one bit. Harry Dalton [former Orioles' general manager who's now with the Brewers] had the best line: 'It didn't make you forget Brooks Robinson, it made you remember him.'"

"A play can only get so good. A diving catch, you can only stretch so far. Then you have to get up and make an accurate throw. That's as good as it can get when it's all out, and these two guys made 'em. When it takes everything to get them, they don't get any better than these two."

Paul Blair, who played with both Robinson and Nettles, never thought he would compare anybody to the old Oriole, but now considers them virtually even. He gave Robinson a "tad's edge" because of his ability to go to the line. But Nettles plays deeper and off the line more, allowing him to spare the shortstop. You can grow old debating the comparison. Nettles prefers to have fun with it, saying, "I told Paul he had a different view. He was watching Brooks from centerfield and he watched me from the bench."

That night against the Orioles was a thrill for Tommy John. "There's that classic phrase from *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid* that covers it all," said the pitcher. "They're being pursued by the

famous lawman of the time and his posse, and either Butch or Sundance says, 'Who are those guys back there? Don't they get tired?' That's Nettles. He's the best in the business. Nobody is close to him."

Still, it took the World Series to open the eyes of baseball fans across the nation to what this man could accomplish on defense. With the Yankees down two games to none, Nettles made four spectacular plays to allow a faltering Ron Guidry to cling to a 2-1 lead until New York broke through with three more runs in the seventh. Three of those plays—on Reggie Smith and Steve Garvey in the fifth and Davey Lopes in the sixth—left the Dodgers with six stranded baserunners and no runs.

John recalls, "It took all the starch out of us. Here they had their best pitcher, they were hitting him hard and he was making those plays. If we had beat Guidry, I'm convinced we would have won it in four straight. Nettles completely changed the complexion of the Series."

The third baseman retold his story to wave after wave of media people that

"Can you imagine Babe Ruth playing today? Steinbrenner would bat him seventh"

night. How he broke into the Minnesota Twins' organization as a minor-league second baseman and thought he had a pretty good chance of reaching the majors because he was a power hitter. "You don't usually get power at that position," he said. "Then a scout came to me and said they have a guy a classification ahead of me who looks like he's going to be a pretty good second baseman. Well, I had seen Rod Carew in spring training and I kind of agreed with them."

Those early years in pro ball shaped the attitude Nettles has today. Tough and durable and yet always looking for a laugh. Called up by the Twins late in the 1967 season, his second year in pro ball, Nettles saw them lose out in a pennant race on the last day in a game at Boston. He noticed how veterans like Harmon Killebrew, Tony Oliva, Bob Allison and Jim Kaat refused to feel sorry for themselves and even made jokes on the plane ride home.

Three years later, having become the regular third baseman for the Cleveland Indians, Nettles saw the vivid contrast when teammate Tony Horton drove himself to mental exhaustion and had to be institutionalized for a time. "He didn't know how to relax," Nettles recalled. "You've got to know how to be able to

forget a bad game and not dwell too long on a good one. He worried about the game constantly. I swore to myself it would never happen to me."

The Nettles' approach, once he was certain he would remain at third base, was to inscribe E5 on the back of his gloves because that's what went up on the scoreboard when the third baseman was charged with an error. That he had a rare ability to play the position should have been detected in 1971 when he set a major-league record of 412 assists. The third baseman to come closest to it made 410 assists for the Yankees in 1973. His name was Nettles, too.

"I think people didn't appreciate him in Cleveland because we had such a horse-bleep team," said Fred Stanley, a teammate then and now. "He'd make good plays and somebody else would screw it up. His greatest asset is he plays so far off the line. He makes it so much easier for the shortstop. That's the toughest play in the world for a shortstop, that backhand slop hit in the hole. Graig would take it away more often than not. He's just now getting the notoriety he should have been getting years ago. He'd be making those plays with Cleveland and Brooks would be making a great play on *The Game of the Week* with a contender."

Not that Nettles didn't learn from Robinson. In his early seasons he would watch the Orioles take infield practice and he noticed Robinson worked at making a lot of off-balance throws on the move. "I added that to my practices and have done a lot of it over the years," Nettles said. "While it may not come up in the games very often, at least you've worked on it and it won't feel so awkward."

The most difficult plays for him are the swinging bunt and the smashed two-bouncer right at him, because he loses perspective of where the second hop is going to hit. His favorite play, and he's made it a number of times, is to make a dive, then be able to readjust and reach overhead for an eerie hop. "I can't imagine a tougher play for a third baseman," he said.

"A lot of people ask me if I work on my diving. That's something you can't work on. It has to be instinctive to do it because the first time you practice it, you'll probably fracture your shoulder. If you practice it, it's not the same intensity as in a game. You have too much time to think about it. When I dive for a ball, very rarely do I feel myself hit the ground because there are so many things going through my mind."

After his sensational World Series game it was as though he had been discovered. He was amused by it. Did people think he had just started making those types of plays that night? He knew better. He felt he had been underrated in Cleveland and in his early seasons in New

Nettles

York. He had come to grudgingly understand it as the fate of Puff, the nickname given him years ago by an Indians' teammate because of Nettles' ability to disappear from their midst without notice. He had his own memento that he valued more than any sudden splurge of newspaper clippings. It came when veteran Dodger third-base coach Preston Gomez approached him before the start of the seventh inning and told him: "You're the best. You kept that young pitcher in the ballgame. You're the best."

The judgment of people in the game has the most significance for Nettles. Later in the off-season he played in a golf tournament with Robinson Brooks asked him if he had received his telegram, the one that said, "Thanks for putting a little defense back in the game." Nettles hadn't. "I wish I had," he said. "That's one I would have kept. To me Brooks is the best because he did it so well for so long."

The intensity he displays on the field can cause him to lose control off the field when things haven't gone his way. He can be a fierce, cruel barter of official scorers who don't see a hit or an error his way. He has a quick temper and while it doesn't surface very often, his obscene verbal assaults on official scorers have left him with enemies in the press. "I can't help it," Nettles has said. "They're making decisions that affect my livelihood. When I think they're wrong I tell them."

Yet even those writers who are disturbed by Nettles' shortness with them will admit he is quick-witted. Usually his humor has some sting but it's without malice. Like the time on *The Dinah Shore Show* last winter when Cyndy Garvey, Steve's wife, was leading Nettles through a neck-loosening exercise, which con-

sisted of lifting and dropping the shoulders, and he said, "Is this what Tom Lasorda does all winter when people ask him how come the Dodgers can't beat the Yankees?"

In an interview with Ross Newhan of the *Los Angeles Times* last winter, Nettles was asked about the advantages of playing in New York. Said Nettles: "The advantage is in getting to watch Reggie Jackson play every day." And the disadvantages: "Well the disadvantage is in getting to watch Reggie Jackson play every day."

Asked if the Yankees could win without Jackson, Nettles said, "We won in '76 without him, and we won when he was suspended last year. I don't see why we couldn't. But Steinbrenner has said that Jackson will be back and that he'll be playing rightfield, which is like saying that we won't be playing our best defensive team. I don't think Lem [manager Bob Lemon] will let that happen, but if it does, we'll know who's pulling the strings. If I played as badly as Reggie does in the field, I'd be embarrassed to go out there. But it just doesn't seem to embarrass him."

In spring training Jackson refused to make a scene about Nettles' comments, perhaps because he had Steinbrenner and rightfield in his corner. All Nettles had going for him was third base. His contract would be up at season's end and he hoped to narrow the difference between his \$200,000 and Jackson's \$600,000, and he wanted to remain a Yankee. But with Steinbrenner, he is never sure of where he stands.

Spring training started out as a good time, a family time. Nettles had his family with him until mid-March. Mike, at nine the oldest of his four children, is the flip side of his father. The boy was seven when he granted his first interview, relating what it was like to be at Dodger

Stadium in 1977 as the son of a World Series performer.

Nettles did a double take when he read the story. Mike had described how he was kind of tired because a ballplayer needed his rest, so Mike had to get up during the night and help his mother feed the baby. "When I told Mike that never happened," Nettles said, "he told me he felt sorry because the reporter didn't have anything to write, so he made it up."

Ginger, Graig's wife, who had their four youngsters with her at the early exhibition games, says, "As good as Graig is on the field, one of the reasons I'm most proud of Graig is that he puts his family first. He pitches in whether it's diapers or getting up to feed the baby."

The day his family left for their New Jersey home also brought a shattering end to the tranquil domesticity surrounding the Yankee training scene. The first excerpts of Sparky Lyle's book, *The Bronx Zoo*, appeared in this magazine and caused another Yankee furor. Which made some people wonder again how this fractious team continues to win. Nettles said, "It wouldn't surprise me if we won even if the problems were worse than they are, because baseball is an individual sport. Nobody in the world can help you when you're not hitting. Some teamwork is involved in defense, but it's mainly communication. It's not like basketball, where you're setting picks, or football, where there's blocking. The only thing I can think of is we better not have a basketball team in the winter."

He continues to feel a distance with Steinbrenner. "Our relationship is not very good," he said. "We both know how we feel about each other. I feel he doesn't show any loyalty to his players in not paying the ones who were here and did the job for him all along." Yankee president Al Rosen is a former third baseman who won the Most Valuable Player



award. Rosen says that he can't help but study Nettles more because of the position he plays. He respects Nettles' play so much, and yet when you repeat that, Nettles practically gags at the words because he considers Rosen merely an extension of Steinbrenner's bidding.

"They keep telling you they respect you," Nettles said. "Only two ways they can show you respect. That's paying you and where you hit in the lineup. I have to feel they're not being very truthful when they say they respect me, because they won't pay me and they won't—or haven't until now—hit me in the middle of the lineup. The last three years I've averaged 32 home runs and practically 100 runs

batted in. For some reason that doesn't get me into the fourth or fifth spot. The reason Reggie has hit fourth is because he yelled and screamed. Apparently it's the only way to get things accomplished, but it's never been my style."

There is venom in him but he thinks it's justified. Sometimes he lashes out at targets who can't understand why. His contract with the Rawlings Sporting Goods Company, which manufactures the glove he wears, was terminated after a feud. Nettles thought Rawlings should sell a line of gloves bearing his name so he could make more money from the company.

"There was a time when his name was used," said Frank Torre, a former major-leaguer and senior vice-president of Rawlings. "The product didn't sell. We made his name available to all the major buyers in the country. None showed any interest. The fact remains that the kid on the street demands we put Reggie Jackson's name on a glove."

Nettles might laugh if it occurred to him that the best thing about the company's big seller is that it comes without Jackson's hand in it. He is a proud ball player. That's all he has ever been, all he ever wanted to be, and he refuses to let adversity get him down.

"He's the best third baseman I ever played with," Catfish Hunter says, "and he acts like nothing ever bothers him. If he doesn't hit, you know he's going to field. I think it's consistency that sets

him apart from others."

"I remember this one trip into Seattle's dome," Nettles said. "I always used to get on Cat about giving up a home run in the first inning. He got the first two guys out real easy this time. So I got the ball after we threw it around, walked it to the mound and said, 'Hey, you're almost out of the inning without a home run.' The next guy hit a nice little two-hopper right at me. I booted it. Sure enough, the next guy hit a homer. Cat looked over at me and all I could do was duck my head and grin a little bit."

Steinbrenner never would understand that kind of byplay, at least not until it's 3-2 Yankees and the game is over. He is as different from his third baseman as Steinbrenner's N.Y. license plate is different from Nettles' PUFF B5 California tag; as dissimilar as the N.Y. logo on the owner's dark-blue ties and the Damn Yankees T-shirt the third baseman favors.

When the team bus headed out of Baltimore for the airport and the flight to Chicago, Nettles was, as usual, in the rear and laid back. He paid homage to the departing view of Babe Ruth's hometown. "Can you imagine Babe playing today?" he said. "Steinbrenner would have him on the scale every day. He'd probably bat him seventh, too. He hit too many home runs."

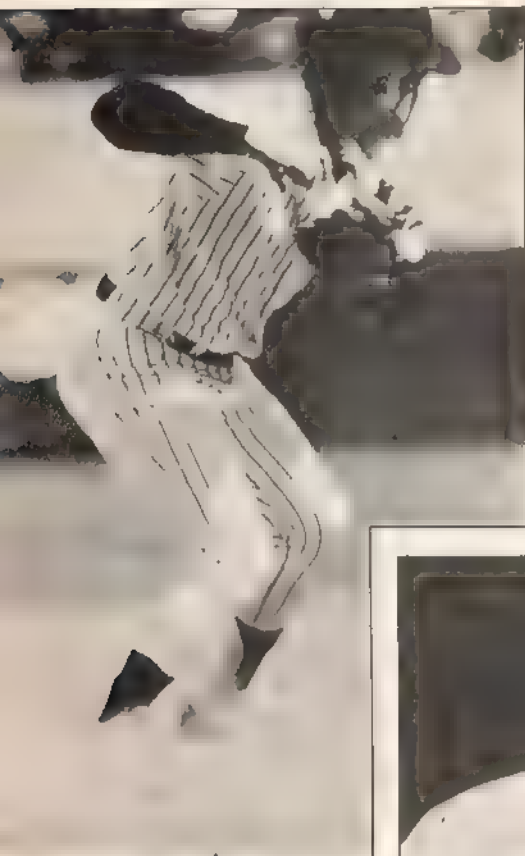
Against the White Sox, Guidry pitched in relief for the first time in 62 games. Bob Lemon went with him for a game ending double play because his prize lefthander needed to throw between starts and Goose Gossage had pitched in four of the first five games. Nettles put another angle on it. "Hey, Goose," he said, "what are you going to do now? Sulk and write a book?"

Gossage got even the next day. He returned to work. The final outs were a smoked double-play ball into Nettles' glove, the one with the tear in the pocket because he's running out of gloves from Rawlings. Gossage asked him how he felt in the clubhouse. "I got a cold beer in my hand and it hurts," he said.

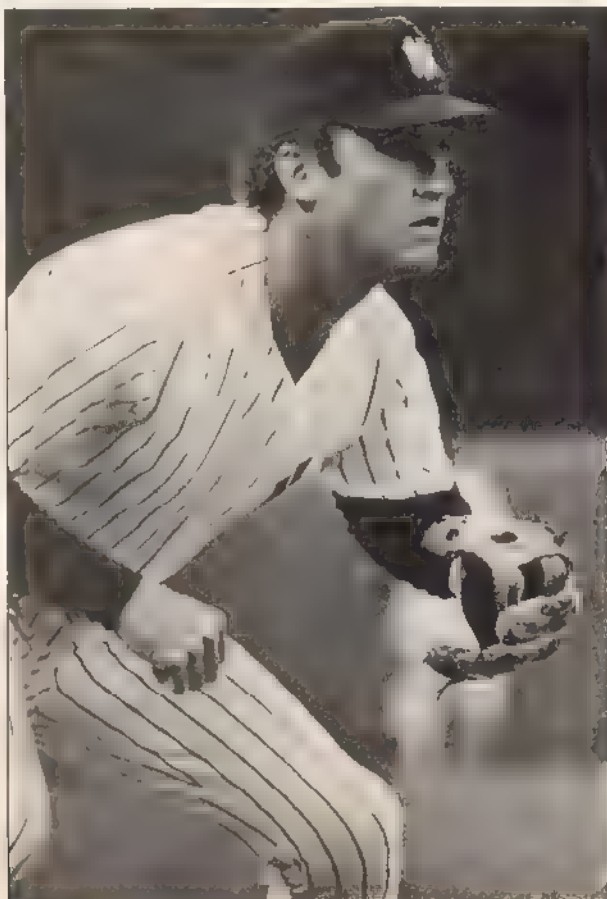
But he had recovered by the plane ride home. Nettles wandered up front and said, "We've got a problem back there. Luis Tiant wants to use the bathroom and it says no foreign objects in the toilet."

Perhaps that quip is not up to last year's high standards when he told his best friend, Sparky Lyle: "You went from Cy Young to sayonara in one year." When he named Thurman Munson the comeback player of the year: "He said he wasn't coming back and he did." And when he summarized life with the Yankees: "Some kids dream of growing up to be ballplayers. Others want to run away with the circus. I feel lucky. I got to do both." ■

JOE DONNELLY, once a SPORT associate editor, is now a sports reporter for the Long Island, N.Y. paper, *Newsday*.



Nettles, whose defensive acrobatics stunned World Series viewers, here makes one of his nonpareil diving stops and, above, starts a bang-bang double play.



THE SPORT INTERVIEW

Ken Stabler

By LAWRENCE LINDERMAN



The embittered quarterback blames Oakland's problems on a porous offensive line and the owner's policies. The Snake says he'd like to bury the hatchet—"right between Al Davis' shoulder blades"

Until the start of last season, Ken Stabler was rated among pro football's premier quarterbacks, and for good reason. With a career completion mark of close to 60 percent, Stabler—the AFC's Player of Year in '76—had proven himself a brilliant field general. Protected by a massive Oakland line that included All-Pros Gene Upshaw and Art Shell, Stabler and the Raiders were once again favored to win the AFC's Western Division title, but a funny thing happened on the way to the Super Bowl: The Raiders' pass protection and defense fell apart, Stabler threw an astonishing 30 interceptions, and Oakland—with a 9-7 record—failed to make the playoffs for the first time in seven seasons. To make matters worse, Raider owner Al Davis seemed to blame the team's collapse on Stabler. Instead of living up to the Raiders' motto of "Pride and Poise," acrimony flowed as freely in the Raider camp as muscatel does on New York's hum haven, the Bowery.

The Raiders' troubles continued after their season was over. Head coach John Madden abruptly resigned on January 4, and shortly thereafter a California sportswriter—in Alabama to interview Stabler—reportedly was set up for a drug arrest. The news made front-page headlines throughout the nation. Even more disheartening to Stabler's fans was his reluctance to discuss the incident. Throughout the '78 season he had not talked to reporters, and he continued his press boycott into the postseason. But then, in early March, the man they called the Snake showed his fangs when he lambasted Al Davis and announced he had no intention of returning to play for Oakland in '79.

All of which came as a shock to observers who'd followed his career from its inception. Born in Foley, Ala. 33 years ago, Stabler was an outstanding athlete from the moment he laced up his first pair of sneakers. By the time he got to high school, he was an accomplished baseball,

football and basketball player, and in his senior year the Pittsburgh Pirates offered \$50,000 to sign the southpaw fastballer. But the desire to play quarterback for Bear Bryant proved too strong to resist. Although Stabler had to ride the bench while Joe Namath led the University of Alabama to a national title, when Stabler finally got his chance to start in 1965, he quarterbacked the Crimson Tide to a share of the No. 1 ranking the following year. Drafted by the Oakland Raiders in 1968, Stabler once again became a bench jockey, this time for five years as he watched and waited while Darvyl Lamonica's mad bombs brought the Raiders into prominence. Finally getting his chance in a 1972 playoff game against Pittsburgh that ended with Franco Harris' "immaculate reception," Stabler became a starter in 1973 and went on to lead the Raiders to a Super Bowl XI victory in 1977.

To interview Stabler, last March SPORT sent freelancer Lawrence Linderman, who over the past several years has conducted *Playboy* magazine's finest interviews with sports personalities, to meet with Stabler in Gulf Shores, Ala., where the quarterback resides during the off-season. Linderman reports: "Gulf Shores sits on the edge of the Gulf of Mexico, along a string of unsullied beaches that the northern press has christened the Redneck Riviera. I met Stabler for the first time at Lefty's, an informal bar and restaurant that he owns in town. In person, the 6-foot-3 Stabler looks much slimmer and younger than he does on televised games, where he appears to be a medium-sized, grizzled old vet. Soft-spoken, extremely polite yet forceful, his southern twang makes him sound like a slightly high-pitched Gomer Pyle. When we sat down over lunch at Lefty's, the subject of Stabler's announcement about not returning to the Raiders was very much in the news, and it provided the opening question for our interview":

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SPORT: Although you may have changed your mind by the time this interview is published, at the moment you're committed to not playing for Oakland this season. How irreconcilable are your differences with the Raiders?

STABLER: I don't think things *can* be reconciled, and I don't want them to be. I might be way off base and maybe I shouldn't feel this way, but I do: Football is a cold, ruthless business and I understand that, but somewhere along the line there ought to be some sort of gratitude shown for all the good years we've given them—and by them, I don't



"Our right tackle didn't play very well, and sometimes it felt like I was standing in the middle of a freeway"

mean the fans, I mean the management. Al Davis—"The Genius." I just don't understand why he started knocking me last season. [Steeler owner] Art Rooney never knocked Terry Bradshaw during those years when Terry was being called a dummy—which he's not. You ever hear [Cowboy president] Tex Schramm knock Roger Staubach? Or [Dolphin president] Joe Robbie knock Bob Griese?

SPORT: Exactly what did Al Davis say that offended you?

STABLER: I'm not feeling *that* bad because I have to consider the source, but all this garbage broke when we were playing bad last year. There were a lot of interceptions and our team was struggling, and Davis told a writer on the team plane that I was like a baseball pitcher—a 21-game winner who was having a 13-game season. Then he came out and said, "Stabler makes more money than anybody else on the team. He gets paid to take pressure." Well, I *do* take it, and I think I handle it very well. But I just don't think things like that have to be said—that's pressure that doesn't have to be exerted. There's enough pressure applied during the game itself, and I apply pressure on myself to be better all the time, to win more, to lead the league in passing, to be the best quarterback in the NFL. So you exert that pressure on yourself—you don't *need* it from management.

SPORT: Did Davis' remarks come as a surprise to you?

STABLER: No, because that's the way he runs his ship, and I don't particularly like it. You know, last year I threw the ball as well as I ever have, and if you look at the stats—and they're not nearly as important to me as winning is—you'll see that my completion percentage [58.4] and average gain per attempt [7.25 yards] was right up to par with what I've averaged for the last six seasons [60.3 percent and 7.75 yards] except for the interceptions [an average of 14.3 over the previous six seasons]. I'll take credit for all 30 of them last season, because I'm the quarterback, but I think only half of 'em were really my fault. The rest of them were like watching a handball game except that the ball

was bouncing off people instead of walls

SPORT: Have you talked to Davis since the end of last season?

STABLER: I wouldn't talk to him if he walked through the door right now. I have no love for him. Davis wanted to talk to me when he came to the Blue-Gray game in Montgomery, Ala., and he called my lawyer, Henry Pitts, to set up a meeting. He wanted me to come up to Montgomery and meet with him to bury the hatchet. I'd *like* to bury the hatchet—right between Al Davis' shoulder blades.

SPORT: If you don't go back to the Raiders, where would you like to play?

STABLER: Well, Atlanta's a good town and they've got a good team, but they also have a lot of money invested in Steve Bartkowski, a good quarterback who's going to get better. He's young, he's got a good arm, and he'll probably be their future. There's been some speculation about me being traded to Tampa, which has a good defensive team. There's only one place for the Buccaneers to go and that's up. The draft is in their favor, so they're gonna get several quality football players this year. It would be fun to take a young quarterback like Doug Williams, who was a rookie last year, and help him with things that only a guy who's played in the league ten years can show him. Don't get me wrong, now, I want to play real bad, but there's gonna come a time when I'll wind up doing that if I stay around long enough. I've also heard that after Ray Perkins was made head coach of the Giants, he indicated he'd like me to play for his team. And in L.A., they're knocking the hell out of Pat Haden and saying he's the reason the Rams can't make it to the Super Bowl, and I don't know if that's true or not. Anyway, L.A. would be the place for me to go if I wanted an immediate shot at another Super Bowl ring. Tampa would be the place to go if I want to play three or four more years and help them build. Either one would be okay.

SPORT: In addition to Oakland's management, you also had a difficult time last season with Bay Area sports-writers. Why wouldn't you talk to them?

STABLER: I wouldn't talk to them for one honest-to-God reason: I didn't want to knock anybody on the team. We had a lot of problems last season with our offensive team. For one thing, Henry Lawrence, our right tackle, didn't play very well, and sometimes—when I went back to throw a pass—it felt like I was standing in the middle of a freeway. He got me banged around a little, which also resulted in my throwing the ball before I wanted to. But if I'd said anything about it, well, it would've been all over the place and I didn't want to do that. We also had a problem with our receivers, because another one of Al Davis' brilliant moves was to bench Freddie Biletnikoff. Freddie hasn't had a bad career; he's probably the No. 4 all-time leading receiver in pro football. But The Genius went to a youth movement and put Morris Bradshaw in there. Well, Morris doesn't play very well, and Cliff Branch didn't play very well either last year. Our outside receivers caught a total of five touchdown passes the entire season. [Tight end] Dave Casper kept us in every game we played. It was strictly Dave and our fullback, Mark van Eeghen, and me when I was playing well. Otherwise, we had more passes dropped last season and more passes tipped for interceptions than ever before. We missed Freddie.

SPORT: Why do you think he was benched?

STABLER: I really don't know. Freddie's 36, but it couldn't have been because he's losing a step, because Freddie's never had a step to lose. I mean, he still runs at basically the same speed, and if he loses one step or two

steps out there, it doesn't matter—he'll still beat people with what he has. Freddie is a great mechanic and the things he does come to a receiver after playing in the league for more than a dozen years. I always wanted him in the lineup because I noticed a drop-off when he wasn't in there. And I don't really mean to criticize Morris Bradshaw, because Morris hasn't had the opportunity to learn certain things yet.

SPORT: Such as?

STABLER: It's hard to explain because a lot of it comes from just knowing Freddie's approach to the game, but let me give you an example: Let's say Freddie's running an end route, where he goes down about 15 or 17 yards and then comes straight across the field at a 90 degree angle. Well, a lot of times there will be linebackers in certain areas, and I have to anticipate where he'll pull up between them or whether he might take it all the way across the field. Meanwhile, Freddie will sense when I'm in trouble and when I have to hurry my pass. And he can also sense when I can hold the ball a little bit longer, and at that point I can see where the best opening is for him, and I'll bet the ranch on which one he takes. I mean, I'll really *know* which one he'll take. Freddie's always made up for his lack of speed with intelligence. He studies the game, and I think he understands what it takes to beat the particular man he's playing against. Plus, he has a great physical ability of being able to catch a football and he's always been a clutch player who comes through in big games.

SPORT: When Biletnikoff finally did get to play in the last two games of the season, did you both feel you showed Al

Davis something when he caught touchdown passes in each of them?

STABLER: Speaking for myself, I can't tell you how happy I was when Freddie scored against Miami and Minnesota. To me, it was like saying, "That's the guy you had on the bench all year." I wanted that to happen so bad, and I was just so happy that it did. Anyway, with Freddie out of there, after a game last season when I'd throw two or three interceptions that really weren't my mistakes, I'd come into the lockerroom and there were certain things I didn't want to tell sportswriters. I wasn't going to stand there and knock anybody, so I just decided not to say anything, but they kept hounding me. They weren't really outwardly angry about it, but some of the stuff they wrote in their newspapers sure was.

SPORT: What are you referring to?

STABLER: Well, after I stopped talking to the sportswriters, they started coming up with all these things about me being out of shape, which wasn't true. I went back to training camp last year in probably the best condition I've ever gone back in. I'd tell you if I was out of shape. I've gone back to camp at 225 pounds, completely out of shape, and wound up leading the league in passing and being the Player of the Year in the AFC. The point is, I reported back to camp last year lighter than ever—my weight was down to about 210—my knees were in better shape than they'd been for a long time, and I was ready to play.

Well, as the year went along and I wouldn't talk to them, the sportswriters began speculating that I wasn't in condition and that my lifestyle hurt me. Up until last year, I think

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Available in pump or aerosol.

I might have been the *most* cooperative player on our team with the press, because I understand that sportswriters have a job to do. But this past year I chose not to talk to them, and maybe I shouldn't expect it, but I felt they should have respected that decision. Instead, they wrote that I was overweight and out of shape. When a writer from *Sports Illustrated* came down to Alabama to see me last year, Wanda, the girl I live with, put the guy on a little by telling him her name was Wickedly Wonderful Wanda. Well, off that story, one Bay Area sportswriter speculated that maybe Ken Stabler shouldn't run around with all the Wickedly Wonderful Wandas of the South. I'm now in the bar business and so they began criticizing *that*, as if I wanted to drink up the booze instead of sell it. It seemed that the more interceptions I had and the more games we lost, the fatter I got, the drunker I got and the more women I had. So I just don't want to work with those sportswriters anymore and I don't want to work with Mr. Davis any more, which is why I can almost guarantee you I won't be back in Oakland this season.

SPORT: Your relations with the press reached their lowest point when Bob Padecky of the *Sacramento Bee* flew to see you in Gulf Shores and was apparently set up for a cocaine bust while waiting to interview you. Except for a brief appearance on an Alabama TV station—the film clip was later used on NBC's *SportsWorld*—you really haven't come forward with your side of the story. What happened?

STABLER: Padecky was the guy who originally broke the story of Davis knocking me, so I called him up and invited him down here because I wanted to know just what Davis had said. Well, everybody knew that Padecky had already been around here digging up garbage and that he was coming back. A month after the season was over, he'd flown



"I think it [the drug setup] could have been done by Padecky or it could've been done by one of my friends"

3,000 miles to go to my hometown of Foley and ask people questions like, "Does Stabler stay in shape?" and "How much does he drink?" I know for a fact that he was doing that, and I still don't understand why. He asked the chief of police in Foley about my driving record and whether or not I drive up and down the beach at 100 miles an hour. He asked the mayor of Foley what he thinks about all my interceptions. Now this is my own speculation about the alleged drug setup: I think it could have been done by Padecky or it could've been done by one of my friends who knew he was going to be here, 'cause I have some people who are loyal to me and who like me a lot. Or I could have been the one who was being set up. This is pure speculation again, but what if I'd been in the car with Padecky

when he was arrested? I'm not so sure that The Genius didn't send him down here—not to set me up, but the time before, when he was asking the mayor and chief of police about me. Anyway, whatever was behind it, it was a set of circumstances that I had absolutely no control over, and I got caught in the middle of it.

SPORT: Has there been any local backlash?

STABLER: No, it's all been okay, but I was really concerned that people in South Alabama might think I was into some kind of thing like that. Every day, though, I've had people come up to me and say, "They won't leave you alone, will they?" It really don't take a Philadelphia lawyer to figure out that, as far as setting Padecky up, I got more sense than that.

SPORT: A few days after the story of Padecky's arrest broke, you said you intended to come back to the Raiders this season. Why did you change your mind?

STABLER: I made that statement because at the time I thought it was my responsibility and obligation to my teammates to go back to Oakland and play and try to win. Being the quarterback, I didn't want to just walk out on them. Mr. Davis didn't comment on any of this—he said that the draft was coming up, and that he had higher priorities to take care of. I don't know if there is a higher priority than your quarterback.

SPORT: What did you take that to mean?

STABLER: That he was playing a mind-game with me. And he continued to do that in the following weeks: The Raiders tried to release a statement in the San Francisco papers about how well Jim Plunkett had been throwing the ball, and then they got Randy Hedberg and tried to plant a story about how well Hedberg and Plunkett were *both* throwing the ball. I know that's true because Frank Cooney, a sportswriter for the San Francisco *Examiner*, called my lawyer and told him about it. The idea was to build a fire under me. I was supposed to think, "Hey, I'd better get my ass in gear and get to work." Well, that dog won't hunt.

SPORT: How much work will you have to do to get in shape for next season?

STABLER: I'm in good shape right now. My weight is down to 208, and I'm usually about 218 at this time of year. What I really want to do is improve the condition of my knees, because they limit me somewhat as to what I can do on the field. I don't know if I can correct it but I'm gonna try, because I'm too easy to find back there when I have the ball.

SPORT: What can you do for your knees?

STABLER: Same thing everybody else does—work on the weight machine and build up the leg muscles. My knees are actually in better shape than a lot of people think they are, you know. For three or four years I taped up both knees before every game, but last season I said the hell with it because I didn't want to start depending on that as a crutch. After a while you get to thinking you can't go out there without having your knees taped up. Well, I didn't have them taped last year, and I was fortunate enough not to get them banged up. And they really feel good now.

SPORT: After two operations on your left knee, how mobile can you be?

STABLER: I don't have any idea, but I bet I'm able to run around a lot better than you'd expect. I've just never wanted to because I've always thought you don't win that way. I still think a quarterback should stay back in that pocket, hold the ball till the very last second and then cut it loose and take his licks instead of running around and improvising. But now I also think you've really got to be able

to move because of the pressure that defenses can put on you. In all my time with the Raiders I was never timed in the 40-yard dash, but this year I'm gonna go out and see what I can do and then work to improve it. I'm *going* to be more mobile, and compared to some other people I don't think my knees are all that bad. I had two knee operations, but Namath played with four, and Charley Johnson—who played for St. Louis for years and who was Denver's starting quarterback three years ago—hey, he had *seven* knee operations. When I think about that, I know I ain't hurtin'.

SPORT: Do you expect any significant changes now that the Raiders' new head coach is Tom Flores?

STABLER: I really don't know. Tom and I have a good relationship, and as a former quarterback, he knows what a quarterback has to deal with. He also knows the Raiders' system very well; he was Oakland's receiver coach, so I think he'll do a good job. There's only one thing that remains to be seen: John Madden was really good at keeping all 40 guys on the team together. By that, I mean that you have 11 players on defense, 11 on offense, and some more who don't play regularly but want to be starters so they can make more money. When they're not playing, they are *really* unhappy people. Then you've got the guys who are having good years and those who are having bad years, those who are having problems on the field and those who are having problems off it. I don't know how John did it, but he was really good at handling 40 different egos, and it remains to be seen whether Tom can do that. As far as knowing football, though, there's no doubt that Flores knows his stuff.

SPORT: What kind of coach was Madden?

STABLER: I think he was an excellent coach, a dedicated man and a hard worker. But anybody who works for Mr. Davis—be it a secretary, a groundskeeper, a head coach or a quarterback—always works in the shadow of The Genius. John, of course, is like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde: On the field he's a raving maniac; I've heard him call officials names that even sailors don't know. But I always liked that and enjoyed the contrast between him and me, because I'm a straight line, nonemotional person when I play football, and John would be on the sidelines pulling his hair out and going crazy, cussin' and raising hell—just going *nuts*. During a timeout just before a crucial play, I'd come over to John and he'd be running his hands through his hair and pumping around, and I'd be standing there waiting to see what he wanted to do. I think John would agree that I kept him calmed down. But he's crazy on the field. Off it, he's a very gentle, polite, passive man who's courteous to everyone.

SPORT: Were you surprised when he announced his resignation?

STABLER: Yes, I was, but I'm glad he did it, mostly because of his health. John was the first head coach I ever saw eat something during halftimes, which are always busy: There's stuff you gotta get up on the blackboard and other things you have to do, and you ain't got *time* to eat. But John had to because of his ulcers, and he'd also be swallowing Maalox and taking pills. I've seen him throw up during halftime, throw up on the plane going to a game, and throw up on the plane coming back. If he stayed, he might've needed surgery. The pressure was just killing him, and working for The Genius didn't help either.

SPORT: Do you think Madden will stay out of football?

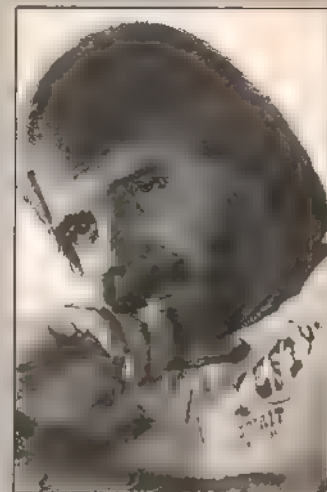
STABLER: He says he will. He called me in January and we spoke for about 45 minutes and he said he'd never felt better. His health's great now, he spends time with his kids, and his wife has a bar and he goes down there to shoot

pool and play pinball. I have some strong feelings for John, and I'm glad he got out because he was hurting.

SPORT: What do you think the Raiders' prospects are for returning to Super Bowl contention?

STABLER: Not too good. You know, ever since taking over at quarterback in '73, I've always felt we were capable of winning the Super Bowl, and we always *were* capable of doing it. We won it in '77, and if not for a referee's call here or Franco Harris' reception there, with very little luck we could've been in two or three Super

"If Madden stayed, he might've needed surgery. The pressure was killing him; The Genius didn't help either"



Bowls in a row. Even before last season, I thought our team had enough talented ballplayers to win the Super Bowl, but I don't think so now. People say winning starts at the top, and maybe losing does, too. The Raiders' front office has always had the ability to bring in exceptional ballplayers and keep an abundance of talent around, and maybe they're not doing that anymore.

I just don't think the team—and I told John Madden this—is as good as the Raiders think it is.

SPORT: Why not?

STABLER: First of all, the offensive line isn't there yet. I mentioned before that Henry Lawrence has to improve a lot, but Mickey Marvin also has a lot to learn. Mickey's a second-year man who's got a big heart and a lot of guts and he's going to be a good player, but he's not right now. And without Biletznikoff, I don't know how well the outside receivers can do. Cliff Branch had two really dynamite years, but last season wasn't one of them, and I don't know how consistent Cliff can be over a long period.

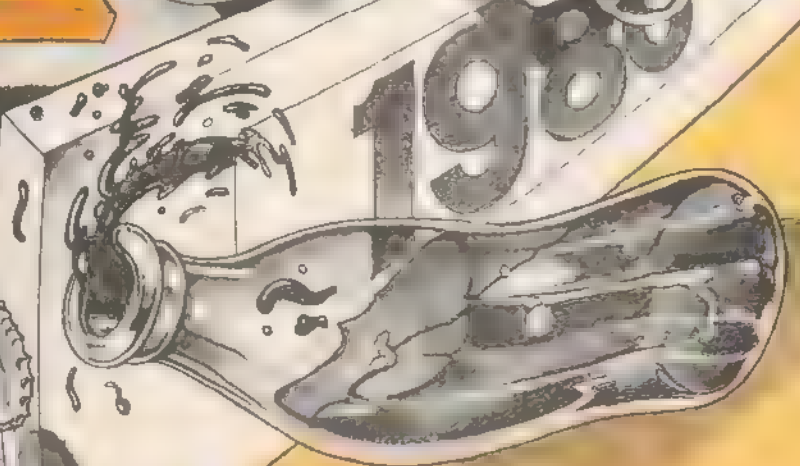
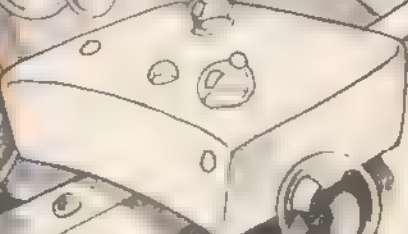
The defensive line is also a problem. We had absolutely no pass rush whatsoever last year, and our linebackers had more sacks than the defensive line. The strength of the Raider defense is the linebackers, and they're great ones—Wilie Hall, Phil Villapiano, Ted Hendricks and Monte Johnson. The defensive secondary needs more depth, though, and the kicking game, well, we didn't get any kind of kickoff or punt returns at all in '78. Nothing. I mean, there's no telling how valuable guys like [Bronco] Rick Upchurch and [Oiler Billy] White Shoes Johnson are to their teams. Ray Guy is still a great punter and Errol Mann has had a great career, and he'll probably kick some more field goals, but the team needs a good, dependable kicker who can bust one from 55 yards to win a game for you.

SPORT: That's quite a shopping list. Are you sure you haven't left anything out?

STABLER: Just one more thing: The Raiders will have to get a quarterback. ■



THE SELLING



OF OUR OLYMPIC TEAMS

For the first time, big business is spending untold millions to "buy" Olympic teams and amateur athletes. But who will benefit most from this funding—the amateur sports hierarchy or the competitors?

By PAUL GOOD

Some 2,755 years ago in a grassy, Greek vale, wrestlers grappled for glory and a garland of laurel leaves in history's first Olympics. Today, the Sun (oil) Company is giving the Amateur Athletic Union nearly a quarter of a million tax-deductible dollars to help train wrestlers for the 1980 Olympics.

When the modern Olympics began in 1896 and a Greek peasant named Loues won the marathon, an overjoyed Athens hotel owner offered him one free meal a day for a year. Today, the Hilton Hotel Corporation has given 1972 gold-medal winner Frank Shorter a comfy year-round job while he—still an amateur training for the Olympics—is permitted to plug Hilton hotels in TV commercials. A few years ago, Shorter could have been punished for such an arrangement and stripped of everything but his shorts. Now, a corporate donation of \$25,000 to the AAU's track-and-field program makes endorsements legal, thanks to recently adopted Rule 26 of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the parent body for 134 national committees.

While the United States Olympic Committee (USOC) solicits public aid via telethons (its April show netted over \$5-million) and direct-mail appeals with the poor-mouth slogan, "Without your help we can't afford to win," over 60 corporations are kicking in well over \$7 million in cash and services for the privilege of using the Olympic symbol in their ads and for other promotional considerations. USOC's \$26 million, four-year bud-

get—double that of four years ago—was virtually assured of being met as 1979 began. It had already raised \$14.5 million on its own early this year, and with its fund drives unabating and an additional \$16 million it has been promised by the federal government, USOC clearly was well over budget. Earlier, USOC officials had indicated that this budget surplus would be applied toward the operation of new Olympic training and medical centers at Colorado Springs and Squaw Valley. However, at a May press conference, USOC executive director Col. F. Don Miller—flanked by the Olympic flag and a Burger King banner—announced that the hamburger chain was donating \$2 million to fund the centers for an undetermined number of years. The money comes from Burger King's advertising budget.

The Lake Placid Olympic Organizing Committee (LPOOC)—aside from receiving over \$15 million in TV rights and \$100 million in state and federal construction funds—is collecting an additional \$30 million from legions of corporations tying in with the Winter Games.

Finally, 32 so-called governing bodies such as the AAU—the largest and most prominent—which represent individual sports ranging from handball to bobsled-ding, are being paid at least \$3 million by corporations. Precise figures are impossible to obtain because the AAU will not release the amounts given to sponsor a sport. These sponsorships, which may pay for such things as the hiring of coaches, the purchasing of equipment or the traveling expenses of the athletes, give the corporation rights to advertise its support of a team for a certain number of

years. The Miller Brewing Company is paying \$500,000 to sponsor the U.S. Track and Field Team, but Adidas and Standard Brands have also bought in.

Times have certainly changed since Walter Camp said, "A gentleman never allows money considerations to affect his sport." The net result is that despite the image of poverty that the USOC, LPOOC and AAU are trying to project, amateur athletics is presently floating on a sea of dollars, swelled by rivers of corporate funds that only four years ago were a mere trickle. On the surface, these dollars contribute to the laudable cause of supporting America's Olympic effort. Underneath, there are murky currents laden with questions concerning the effect of so much money on the amateur ideal, the wisdom of permitting amateurs to endorse commercial products and the difficulty in knowing just how much is actually getting to the athletes.

The list of corporations suddenly interested in amateur athletics is studded with names more familiar to the financial pages than the sports section. USOC contributors include Alcoa, Kodak, Toyota, Coca-Cola, Wrigley's, McDonald's, Clairol, Dannon. Under the AAU aegis, in addition to those mentioned, Mack Truck is sponsoring the weight-lifting team, and Phillips Petroleum sponsors swimming and diving and Adidas and PepsiCo contribute to swimming.

In the Winter Games, Anheuser-Busch is partners with the bobsled team, providing an unspecified amount of cash and ten sleds costing \$4,100 each and bearing both the Budweiser and AAU logos. The logos may be displayed in competitions

Olympic Sell

leading up to the actual Olympic runs.

The Winter Games are also indebted to the Ford Motor Company, which is giving LPOOC an undisclosed amount of money in cash and "services" (including the use of 581 cars). Ford is the "official" car of the Winter Olympics. Coca-Cola is giving LPOOC \$1.5 million in cash, demonstrating an open-minded marketing approach to both capitalism and communism since it is already the "official" drink of the Moscow Summer Games.

Other noteworthy donors to the LPOOC for the Winter Games include American Express (\$500,000 cash), *Sports Illustrated* (\$480,000 in free advertising), and Texas Instruments (\$360,000 cash plus \$1.5 million in computers). A spokesman for the LPOOC has refused to confirm or deny the amounts of corporate donations printed here. Among the considerations received by the donors in addition to using the Olympic symbol in their ads, is a generous ticket allotment. Some 74,000 tickets to the Winter Games—15 percent of the total—are reserved for the corporations.

Within a few months, the public will be exposed to ads featuring the U.S. Olympic shield in conjunction with U.S. Tobacco Company products, Stress Tab drugs from Lederle Laboratories, and Schlitz and Budweiser Beer. It will see top Olympic athletes such as Shorter make TV pitches for products.

"It's very attractive for corporations to relate to something as clean and wholesome and patriotic as the Olympic Games," says Bernard Tremblay, the former deputy marketing director for the LPOOC. "I don't know exactly when the merchandising of the Olympics began, but there was very little before the late '60s. I really think that the massive television coverage at Munich made it a big thing. The drama really stirred interest. Once this happens, you can capitalize on it, you can begin to merchandise."

"Now that the Olympics have risen in profile, they've got to come off right because so many people have invested so much in them. They have to be weather-proof at Lake Placid, for example, which costs a fortune. But you must assure that the investment is gonna pay off. Does that mean Olympic expenditures are climbing to reach more income? Yeah, right. But let me tell you, 1984 in Los Angeles will make all this look like peanuts. That will be the Big Daddy."

Joseph Scalzo, a past president of the AAU and its national industrial chairman, says: "We could have been raising money like this all along. Except for the new rule on an athlete making an endorsement so long as his governing body gets the money, there never was a rule against

corporations helping. And so what if companies now promote themselves while promoting a good cause? Amateur sports has to raise a lot more and make sure the money gets to the athletes and doesn't get lost along the way in official salaries or facilities that aren't needed. What worries me, frankly, is the possibility of under-the-table stuff. The moment you move into making money out of amateur sports, you're gonna have all kinds of ancillary problems."

"Amateur sports are in," says USOC official Bob Paul. "They've never been in a better position to bargain for corporate support. What's wrong with it? As far as product endorsements go, I would hope the governing bodies put pressure on athletes to appear in commercials."

All this dollar emphasis, which sometimes seems incredibly and sadly remote from the sprinter poised in the blocks or the skier carving a mountainside with heart-stopping precision, occurs within a complex, Olympic-sports structure germybuilt over more than eight decades. At the top of the chart is the IOC, whose

Despite the image of poverty... amateur athletics is floating on a sea of dollars

member countries send some 7,000 athletes to the Games. Olympic-host countries also have one-time organizing committees like the LPOOC which must raise a ton of money in a short time to prepare facilities in an era when a doghouse can't be built without construction-cost overruns.

The IOC has established certain rules and standards about such items as amateur eligibility and fund-raising. Generally, the IOC relies on international sports federations to police its own members in most matters.

In similar fashion, the USOC and other committees depend on the governing bodies of each sport to conform to the regulations of their international federation and to certify that their athletes are indeed amateurs. Congress last year restructured U.S. amateur athletics in a radical and controversial move designed to end internecine squabbles between the AAU and NCAA, for example, and to create a more orderly system for creating the best Olympic teams. The USOC was named the coordinating body for all amateur sports. However, each individual sport, through its governing body, retained considerable autonomy and all were to share in millions of federal dollars channeled through the USOC for the 1980

Games.

Among the individual sports' governing bodies are the AAU (which holds the franchise for eight Olympic sports), the U.S. Gymnastic Federation, the U.S. Team Handball, the Figure Skating Association, the National Rifle Association of America, the U.S. Yacht Racing Union, etc. One thing that all this diversity assures is fragmented authority and fund-raising standards that vary from sport to sport with no central accountability for monies raised or expended.

For example, the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF), which governs track and field, adopted the IOC's Rule 26 although other federations did not. For so-called minor sports without great public appeal, the matter was academic since corporations were not about to bid for, say, an obscure fencing champion no matter how brightly his gold medal glittered. But the rule did allow track and field to deal for the kind of endorsements that the USOC itself would not make.

"People are going into contracts all over the place," says Bill Campbell, assistant to the USOC's director Art Kuman. "We have no control over their ads. This is something where the governing body makes the deal. They might call our lawyers about what they can or can't say. But generally it's a case of whatever they say, they have to live with. We certainly won't tell them how to run their merchandising."

This dramatic liberalization of fund-raising rules had been sought by U.S. delegates to the IAAF. For years, it was no state secret that in Eastern European countries, athletes were heavily subsidized. Elsewhere, not-so-sub-rosa corporate sponsorships of teams were a way of life, with ski teams in particular turning the slopes into a glistening merchandise mart. American officials at one time wrapped themselves in a red, white and blue flag of probity, disparaging such behavior. But as Russia and other socialist countries became increasingly competitive, these officials were increasingly torn between lofty principles and a down-to-earth desire to field the best teams that money could buy. Not that American teams were being wiped out under the old way of amateur life. Track and field is the premier event of the Summer Olympics, and at Montreal in 1976 the U.S. men's team won six gold medals while no other country won more than two. And money can't necessarily buy gold medals.

In certain events—particularly those dominated by mature postcollegiate athletes who have to support themselves—we did not do so well. Even in track and field, half of the American athletes face the problem of supporting themselves, and that figure approaches 100 percent in other sports.

USOC director Kuman represents a

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prevailing attitude in the amateur hierarchy: "Everybody was saying, 'Hey, what are we going to do for our athletes, we're gettin' our pants knocked off.' But it's good that we got our pants knocked off, because it made people sit up and take notice. Here we are, a wealthy country giving billions of dollars in foreign aid. What are we doing for our own athletes? So now we say, in effect, 'Put your money where your mouth is; here's where you can help.'"

"We never sought government subsidization. We're the only country in the world where the government doesn't subsidize sports. You cannot let the government bureaucracy be involved in the selection of a team."

Are corporations helping just out of altruism or is there a little something in it for them?

"There's obvious value for companies in a tie-in," Kuman replies, "because you're talking about the *crème de la crème* when you're talking about Olympians. Only contributors to us or to the LPOOC can use the Olympic symbol, and our contributors have to submit ads or releases to us for screening. They can't use words like USOC-endorsed or approved, because we certainly don't endorse any product. Unfortunately—and we're gonna iron this out before 1984—LPOOC permits things we don't, such as having an 'official' this or that."

Do you think it's right that companies should be allowed to use amateur athletes to push commercial products? Couldn't public confidence in the Olympic ideal suffer?

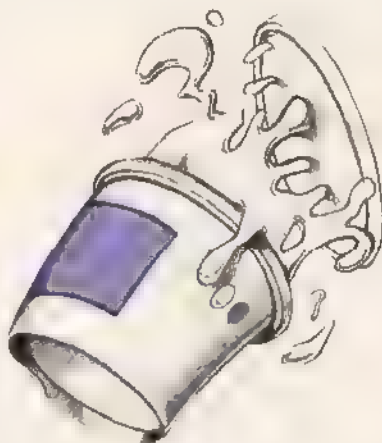
"I do not believe they should do it to the detriment of our amateur athletes. But as far as pushing a product, we live in the free-enterprise system and there's nothing wrong with that. As far as the public's concerned, I don't think they get a bad impression at all. Unless somebody gives it to them."

Kuman may be correct in his last estimate, since the dollar revolution has gone its way in one sport after another with virtually no public discussion, to say nothing of criticism. On March 11, the N.Y. *Times*' story on the American Cup gymnastics competition noted in passing that Kurt Thomas, this country's super performer, received approximately \$25,000 in traveling and living expenses from the U.S. Gymnastics Federation, which has received some \$600,000 in the last 18 months from Dial Soap. About the only public reaction to this cost-of-living revelation about Olympic gymnasts came from Jerome V. Poynton, who had been gymnastics coach at Clemson University in South Carolina.

"The Olympic Games," he wrote the

Times, "should be just another competition for the amateur athlete rather than a rigged-up, spectator-consumer-oriented spectacle that will eventually undermine the ethics and the sense of honor that once dominated athletics."

Later, Poynton, who was a nationally-ranked gymnast at the University of Michigan, told SPORT: "It's all selling hamburgers, all economics. I get so fed up with these organizations and their mania for the dollar. There's a tendency to make stars who can be exploited, to make sports exclusive instead of inclusive. And nobody knows if the money raised ever gets down to the athlete or if it gets eaten



up by administrations and what have you."

Tom Stock, 1978 national superheavyweight lifting champion who has the Olympics on his mind, thinks differently. He is one of scores of amateurs across the country who have been hired by major companies that grant liberal time-off for training. The track-and-field team alone has some 40 athletes in its "job opportunity" programs.

"I was making \$30 a day as a substitute teacher in Belleville, Ill., working one or two days a week," Stock says. "In February, when Anheuser-Busch offered me a job in sales training, I was at the breaking point, worrying where the rent was coming from, wondering if I could afford gas to get to the gym. Food bills for a lifter are outrageous. You can talk about commitment to making the Olympic team, but the point is: Can you hold to the commitment monetarily?"

"The people at Anheuser-Busch said it would be a good opportunity for me to get into the sales program with them and have a good future after the Olympics. I wasn't just hired because of athletic ability. They've been very congenial when it comes to my training. They bend over backward at every point, whether it's working only half a day, or getting off on days I need to travel to meets. These things were all discussed up front before I was hired, and if they ever wanted to use me in endorsements, posthaste I'd be there to help out."

Stock is a superheavyweight but he is not a superstar. And there are thousands of less-talented athletes dreaming of the Olympics. How they will benefit from all the money floating around and how much will go into the empire-building activities of amateur organizations is impossible to determine at this point. Monies are mixing in such a bewildering fashion—with federal donations and sponsorships for year-round development—that it would tax the skills of a Mafia accountant to figure it all out.

While SPORT does not suggest any fiscal impropriety is occurring, the dollar magnet of the word "Olympics" is being passed from hand to hand with controls that often appear inadequate or nonexistent. In late April, for example, New York State officials began an investigation of two firms hired by the LPOOC to raise funds to determine if there had been a misappropriation of revenues.

One respected amateur official who does not want his name mentioned says: "In a way, both the Olympic Committee and the government hurt sports in the sense that when you give to them, you don't give directly to the sport. So much is going to go to training centers that nobody needs. We have hundreds of excellent college facilities all over the country that can be used. I'd say that if 20 percent of what's donated to USOC gets down to the place you want—if ten percent, five percent, one percent does—you're lucky. It's like the United Appeal. You might want to support this little agency over here and you give to United Appeal, and by the time it trickles down to them, one penny out of your hundred got there."

Between 1980 and '83, the USOC will be handing out up to \$10 million in federal money for projects presented to it by the governing bodies. The AAU got \$2 million in the 1976-80 budget, and its future share is not yet set, but, whatever it may be, the USOC does not get an account of how these funds are spent or how much the governing bodies are raising on their own.

"I don't know what the total figure for the AAU is, for example," USOC official Paul explains. "If I asked the AAU, they'd tell me it's none of my business. Which is right."

The AAU, while accepting taxpayers' money, does not feel obliged to make fund-raising figures available.

However, Jim Fox, one AAU national sports liaison between teams and corporations, says that such fund-raising "is going extremely well. While we don't have a budget, we're looking for as much money as possible to put the best athletes in the world on the mountain." He says that through April, all but two of the eight sports for which AAU is the governing body had corporate sponsors. Only luge and judo were still looking. In addition to



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the corporations already mentioned in this article, the AAU receives funds and services from Fleischmann's Margarine, Hertz, Naturite (health products), Holiday Inns and Sears. Corporations may not be knocking down doors at the AAU, but they certainly are entering them.

Hilton Hotel Corporation walked in this year, and \$25,000 later it emerged with marathoner Frank Shorter and with what a spokesman accurately described as an "arrangement which is the first in amateur sports history." Shorter, an Olympic gold and silver winner, is a nice-looking young man possessing great determination, a law degree and a tongue as nimble as his feet.

With the jogging mania turning America into one vast human stampede, Shorter was an ideal athlete for some corporation to grab, and Hilton's marketing division originally grabbed him as a consultant some time in 1978. One of his duties was to help develop an exercise manual for tired businessmen called "How to Win on the Road," which will find its way into 185 stateside Hilton Hotels. The job gave Shorter free time to train for the Olympics and to pursue his other business enterprises.

But Shorter would have risked his amateur status by permitting Hilton to exploit his Olympic medals. Worse, Shorter could help write a manual, but he could not endorse the hotels as great stopovers without losing his amateur status. Then, as Shorter, AAU executive director Ollan Cassell and Hilton vice-president James Collins explained at a recent press conference, the dilemma was resolved.

"The AAU had told me in 1977," said Shorter, "that track and field had approval from the IAAF for athletes to endorse products if the money went to the governing body. When Hilton asked me, 'Hey, can you do a commercial?' I said, 'No, I can't.' Suddenly a light went on in my mind."

The illumination led Hilton to present a \$25,000 check to the AAU, for Shorter's services. "It's great for me," Shorter explained. "I come to work two days a week, make appearances at hotels around the country, and still have time to train. And the AAU program benefits."

"We think with this program it's time for the free-enterprise system to take advantage of what can be done," said Cassell. "No, we don't care what they say or don't say in the commercials. That's agency business and we don't get into that."

There's little doubt that the free-enterprise system will be quick to take advantage. Because what nobody said at the press conference was that corpora-

tions have suddenly been given carte blanche to hire any amateur athlete to shill for them just as they would a professional. And, for the moment at least, at a paltry fee. Is there anything to prevent a company from giving an amateur some no-show job equivalent to turning out the lights in the gym just to snare an endorsement?

"We'll have to be very careful," said Cassell.

One thing seems certain. Now that track and field has shown the way, the governing bodies of other sports will be quick to follow. It's a great way to raise funds. What it does to the concept of amateurism is something else.

"I don't see any danger in it," says 1980 U.S. Olympic track-and-field coach Jimmy Carnes. "I've got a dozen athletes lined up who could accept endorsements tomorrow. But they must realize that they can't accept any endorsement money personally or they immediately become professionals. The reaction of athletes to this is very good. The most important thing they want to know is if the endorsement money will be coming back to their programs and not just staying in the AAU coffers. As soon as we get enough companies as sponsors, then we're going to



disburse the money back to them in the form of training stipends and travel funds. Some day I hope we'll be raising \$5 to \$10 million a year from all corporate sources just for track and field."

In a time of rampant materialism and its attendant devaluation of the concept of sacrifice, America seems to be well on the way to the semiprofessional amateur system that it once despised, although all aspects of the current funding revolution are not despicable.

It is apparently an act of faith in the amateur hierarchy that the government should not fund amateur athletes with taxpayers' money. But if the government doesn't give (or only gives infrequently), then amateur athletics need money from private sources. How much, from where, under what controls, are questions that need to be answered.

All corporations presently donating to, sponsoring or servicing the Olympics are not shameless exploiters. Sun Company, for example, keeps a low profile in its intelligent support of a national wrestling coach and staff that in a short time has

helped amateur wrestling a great deal. Sun to date—is not commercializing on its assistance.

Others are commercializing with a vengeance and nobody in authority seems to be calculating the eventual effect this may have on public confidence in amateurism or in the integrity of the athletes who see megabucks, raised through their efforts, floating all over the land.

Today, Frank Shorter—a man of character and ample income by all accounts—has been given a job, of sorts, at Hilton and his team gets \$25,000 while he reads Hilton commercials on TV. Tomorrow, men in business may seduce needy or susceptible athletes to take no-show jobs and sell out their birthright as amateurs to do a similar commercial. That is, athletes will become, in essence, paid, professional amateurs competing under the protective cover of donations made to their governing body.

Today, companies sponsoring teams are supposed to be circumspect in their advertising. Tomorrow, as the public grows accustomed to amateurism in the garb of professionalism, would it be surprising if kids were enticed to emulate Olympic heroes by popping candy bars because they are advised that candy bars provide sure energy in the decathlon? Since it's already suitable for the young to identify beer and tobacco with the Olympic symbol, why shouldn't the Olympics help promote cavities, too?

Aside from such moral considerations, what about all the cold (hot?) cash pouring in? If a citizen gives \$10 to the Olympics, shouldn't the citizen know whether most of it is really going to an athlete down on his sweatsocks and not to some bureaucrat within the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee, the USOC or one of the myriad governing bodies? And mentioning those governing bodies, how can the USOC coordinate the total Olympic effort if it can't even exert some accountability over the corporate funds that those bodies are raising in the Olympic name?

There are many more questions that require asking and answering. Readers will come up with their own. But the question that seems to demand an immediate answer is: Shouldn't there be some national discussion before teams that perform in the name of all Americans be rented in whole or part to the highest bidder? If the question is discussed, then most Americans might decide that the current revolution is just fine. For those who would disagree, laurel leaves are selling for \$5 a bunch and there's no shortage of grassy vales for athletes who still like to run or wrestle for the sheer thrilling hell of it.

Contributing Editor PAUL GOOD recently covered the congressional investigation of the NCAA for SPORT.

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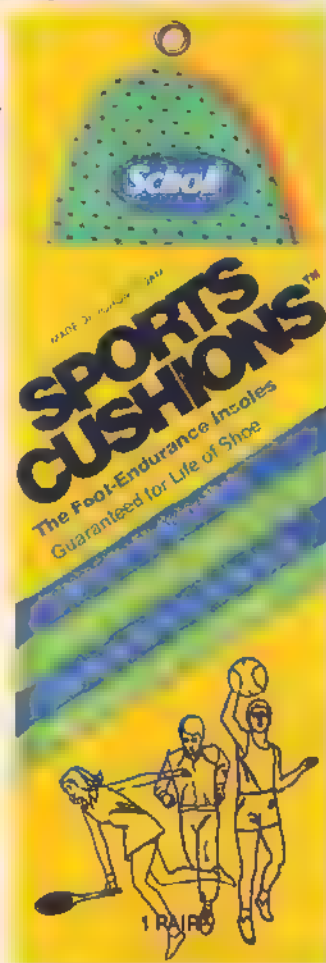
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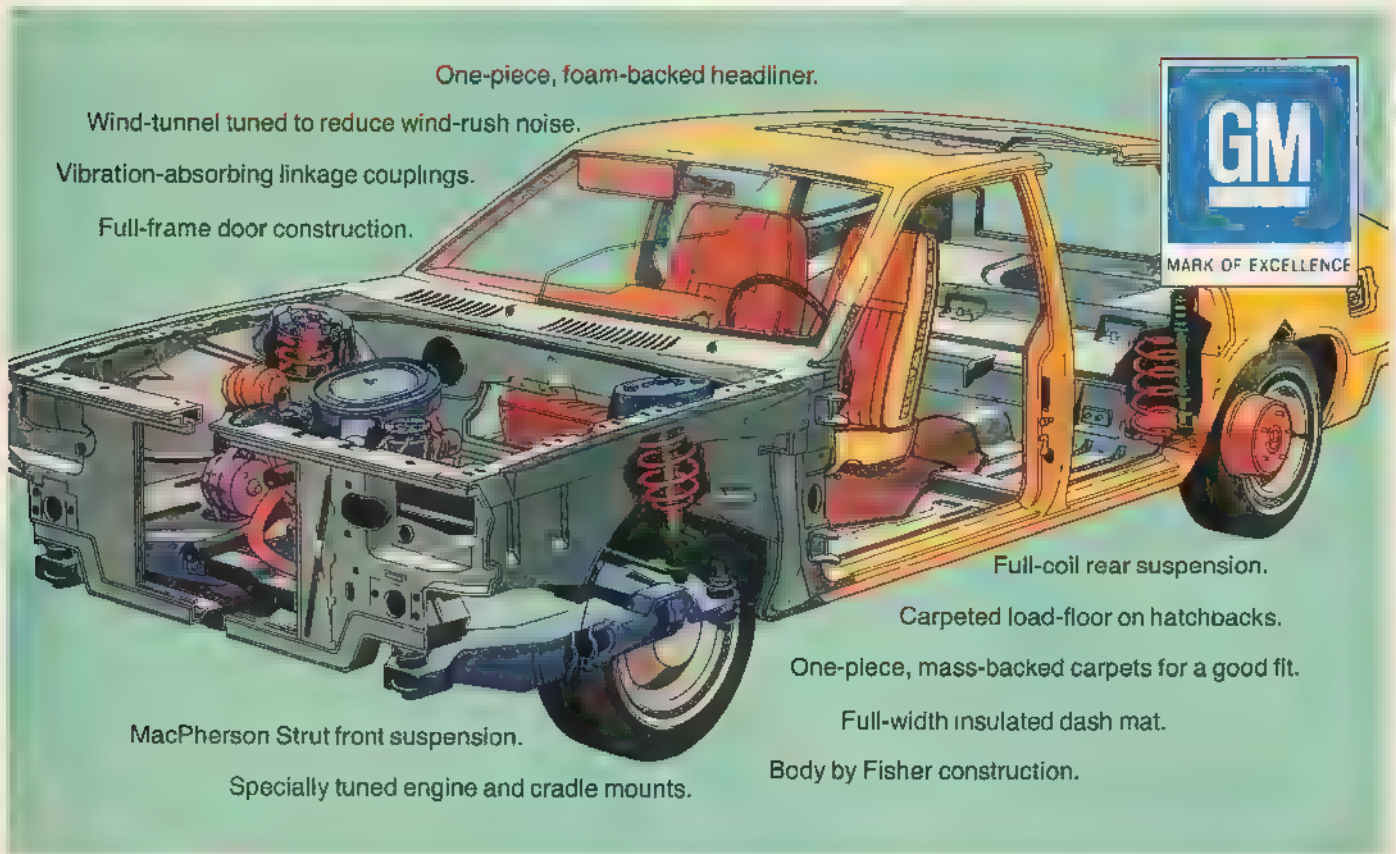
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From the day the new Chevrolet Citation, Pontiac Phoenix, Oldsmobile Omega and Buick Skylark first started taking shape on the drawing board, a prime design objective has been to please the ear as much as the eye.

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One of the ways we went about this was an all-out effort to isolate the passenger compartment from the engine, suspension and other chassis hardware.

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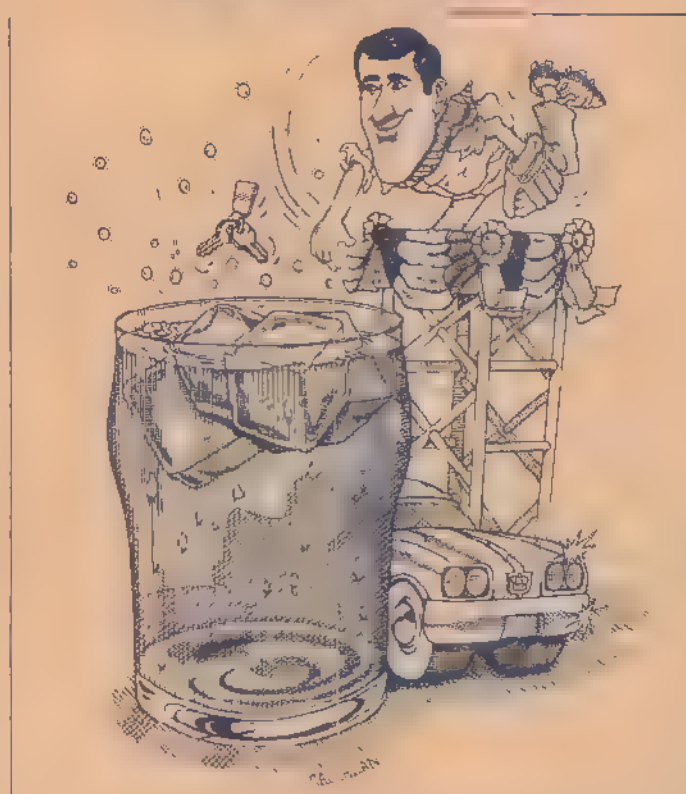
"For the last ten years Portland baseball fans have been lied to, cheated, had their team taken away from them, had it replaced by another, and had that one taken away. A sad story. But it's gonna stop. My plan is complete."

That's Dave Hersh talking, folks. He's standing square in the middle of the worn AstroTurf of Portland's Civic Stadium. Vowing to bring major-league baseball to Oregon by 1984, the dapper 24-year-old Hersh has taken reign of the very nonlegendary Portland Beavers, a Triple-A team in the Pittsburgh organization. Hersh is the youngest owner of a Triple-A team in history. And perhaps the most energetic. During the past two years Hersh has turned two notorious Class-A losers into league champions in a single season and broken attendance records for both clubs in the process. The National Association of Baseball Executives voted him Class A baseball exec of the year in 1978. Now, backed financially by "14 family friends," Hersh has hit the semibig time.

His long suit is promotion. "I'll provide fans with exciting, traditional baseball," he says, "and, before and after the games, the wildest, classiest entertainment my slender checkbook can provide."

In the past, such entertainment has included his "Cash Scramble," a little number where he dumped \$3,000 in small bills from a helicopter over the Appleton Foxe's

SPORT Talk



stadium in Wisconsin and had his fans scramble for the dough. On another occasion, he fed ravenous fans a thousand-foot-long submarine sandwich.

"And that's nothing," Hersh promises. His lineup for the 1979 Beaver baseball season includes handing out \$5,000 worth of diamonds to Beaver-watching mothers on Mother's Day, a 48-hour appearance by the San Diego KGB radio Chicken, and construction of the World's Largest Glass of Seven-Up—a swimming-pool-sized con-

tainer filled to the brim with the bubbly Uncola. Then, if everything goes right, he will chuck the keys to a brand-new car into the middle of it and... "I just hope," he muses, "that nobody gets too much carbonation up their nose."

Selling any kind of ball in Portland, a city where minor-league franchises have failed before, will be a chore. But, Hersh assures, "You can quote me on this. Take it to the bank, Dave Hersh is gonna make this club a winner, 'cause Dave Hersh just doesn't know how to lose."

Twenty-eight games into the season, the Beavers were just two and a half games out of first place, and attendance was up 100 percent. Hersh seemed to be making good on his word.

Hersh's winning solution, ultimately, is traditional. "I believe in playing very straight ball. I'm no Bill Veeck," he says. "I won't put a midget up to bat or have a Martian playing centerfield. I will, however, start World War III in the stadium if I get a chance—but only before or after the game."

—MARK CHRISTENSEN

ASK BILL LEE

Montreal Expos lefthander Bill Lee responds to this month's question: *How do you like playing in Montreal?*

"Once I get through customs, everything is okay."

Send your questions to Bill Lee in care of SPORT, 641 Lexington Ave., New York, N.Y. 10022. We'll print more of his answers next month.

RADICAL ON ICE

Last February, at the national figure-skating championships in Cincinnati, 18-year-old Allen Schramm began his five-minute freestyle program with sensual gyrations and intricate footwork attuned to the gentle strains of Emerson, Lake and Palmer, then Billy Joel's soulful "Piano Man."

Moments later, Schramm did a leaping, full twist and grabbed his outstretched toes in midair as the music upshifted to "Roundabout" by Yes. Six quick jumps flowed

into two-and-a-half airborne revolutions, and at the end Schramm, to the accompanying frenzy of a driving guitar lick, did a tight, upright spin that stopped dead with the final chord. Schramm plummeted to the ice, spread-eagled and motionless.

Wild clapping, shouts and whistles erupted around the rink in response to Schramm's creative freestyle routine. But the response turned to a deluge of boos two minutes later when only moderate scores from the judges locked the blond San Franciscan into seventh place overall.

"Supposedly you can do anything you want in the long program, but at this point the judges really are not tuned into my more subtle innovations or my theatrical style," Schramm charged after a recent workout as he tried to hone his skills for a berth on the Olympic team. "My drop to the ice was probably misconstrued as a slip by a couple of judges."

Schramm refuses to go along with the common practice in most programs of merely stringing together isolated "main tricks." He painstakingly connects each leap and spin with a series of icebound maneuvers—all faithfully in sync with the music he has edited. The aesthetic presentation is balanced evenly with the athletic aspect of the program. Unfortunately, Schramm missed the 1977 and 1978 U.S. championships due to illness, and he lacks the flawless execution and wide exposure crucial to the top amateur skaters.

"Schramm is one of those rare artists—like Toller Cranston or John Curry [the 1976 Olympic champ with ballet moves]—who add new elements and expand the sport," former gold medalist and ABC commentator Dick Button confided. "But a creative person must be perfect technically or conservative judges will slap him down."

Only the three highest

finishers at this December's pre-Olympic nationals will go to Lake Placid. But even if Allen Schramm is overlooked for the 1980 Games, he is confident that he will have a successful future in the unrestricted creativity of modern professional skating.

—GLENN LEWIS

CUTTING A SORRY FIGURE

"Creative" or "aesthetic" would be the last words you'd use to describe the skating of Dave Schultz, the well-known

Pittsburgh, Schultz complained that his reputation had preceded and retarded his NHL career.

"If I was coming up from the Juniors now," Schultz said, "I'd still have to be aggressive, but I'd prefer to be more like Clark Gable [Islanders] or Barry Beck [Rockies]—big guys who can handle themselves but who hardly ever fight... who don't want to be known as goons."

"But what happens—not just in hockey, but in all walks of life—is that you're branded a certain type. They used to tell

turnaround and become a polished player, as did Boston's former roughneck Terry O'Reilly, it's unlikely that Buffalo coach Bill Inglis will give him a regular turn next season unless he utilizes a fourth line. Schultz wants to play more.

"A lot of it is my own fault," Schultz reflected. "I got programmed into a rut. I'd look at my stats and see that four goals, eight assists and 100 penalty minutes and think that was what I was supposed to do."

"I was wrong, partly, but in Philly [1972-1976] that's what they wanted me to do... fight. And that's definitely what the fans want. I used to hear them chanting, 'Hit someone!' and I'd get carried away. Maybe if I had just concentrated on hockey, things would be different."

—GARY KENTON



As a flyer, Schultz (playing comedian) led with Boston's testy Terry O'Reilly, who is now a polished player.

hockey hitman who, lacking the necessary skating finesse to excel in the NHL, is having second thoughts about his violent past. Speaking from his home in Buffalo, where he'd skated only a few shifts a game with the Sabres following a midseason trade from

me. "We don't want you to score goals," so I never worked on that part of my game."

That part of his game is now an Achilles Heel which has hampered his future in the league. Although Schultz may have the skill and drive to accomplish a Jekyll-and-Hyde

CUSTOM MADE

Baltimore Orioles pitcher Mike Flanagan has a contract with a Japanese sporting goods firm which manufactured and gave him his glove. The firm printed Mike's name on the back: Flanagan.

THE GEORGE BURNS EXERCISE ROUTINE

George Burns, at 83, is smoking a cigar one rainy morning in his hotel suite, offering physical fitness tips to anyone who will listen. "I exercise every morning," he says, standing up to demonstrate. "I gotta show you this." He puts down the cigar. He is not moving. "I do 30 or 40 of these." Still no movement.

"Here's another one I do. I don't know what you call this. The doctors told me, 'Don't do it,' but they all died, so what do they know?" Almost imperceptibly, he moves his pelvis back and forth in a slightly obscene manner. "When you get old, they say the first thing that goes is your back. Well, I don't care about my back. It goes, I

go with it. I can't do anything about that."

Burns moves into his neck-stretching exercise, wiggling his shoulders up and down as if he were shivering in a doorway. Then he swings his arms a little. "I'm an old dancer—this is my disco exercise. You gotta count while you do it." After running through the floor exercises (slowly raising bent knees six inches-or-so off the ground), Burns explains that he doesn't believe in floor-touching exercises from a standing position. "I sit."

Jogging, maybe? "I don't get paid for jogging. But I walk. I used to be a buck-dancer—that's more strenuous than jogging. Does Fred Astaire jog?" Other sports? "I play bridge. At my age, the only thing I can lift is 13 cards."

—RICHARD TURNER

George Burns



SPORTSMEDICINE

Getting the Injury Treatment

By Robert K. Kerlan, M.D.,
Medical Director, National
Athletic Health Institute

Recently released statistics from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare revealed that more than one million injuries—111,000 of them serious—occurred in high school and college athletic programs during the 1975-76 school year. These are pretty frightening statistics, particularly since my experience shows that the severity of many such injuries can be reduced if parents, athletic supervisors and competitors would arm themselves with commonsense rules.

Primarily, you need to know what to watch for when an athlete is injured. In last month's column I spoke of the danger signs and follow-up procedures to pursue for injuries to the head or neck. This month, I'll provide guidance for dealing with other injuries.

Very often, after a severe blow to the chest or rib cage, an athlete will complain only of pain or bruising. But then he may suddenly develop shortness of breath or start spitting up blood. If this happens, take him to the hospital immediately; though a rare injury, it's possible that the lung has been punctured by the rib.

If some difficulty in breathing is produced by a blow to the stomach, this usually signifies nothing more serious than "having the wind knocked out of you." But if a severe blow to the stomach results in a sudden, overwhelming sense of weakness, complications are probably occurring. Possible harm to the abdomen is particularly dangerous. The

abdomen houses the spleen and liver, and severe damage to these vital organs can cause rapid or slow internal bleeding. If the spleen actually ruptures, there will be tremendous pain, but it is also possible for someone to lose up to a quart of blood with no obvious symptoms. Therefore, after a blow to the abdomen, if there is a rapid pulse, a feeling of weakness and pale, clammy skin—it is critical to see a doctor immediately.

With back injuries, the danger signs to look for are numbness, weakness, tingling or pain in the lower extremities. These signs, too, require an immediate visit to a physician because they could indicate a serious spinal cord injury. With injuries to the flank or kidney area, always check the urine for blood. Although this symptom is not always serious, it must not be ignored.

In a game that involves throwing a ball or striking one, such as baseball or football, the shoulder and elbow are subject to injury without a serious blow or fall. Be alert to continual pain in the shoulder or elbow. This type of injury, caused by repeated strain, comes on insidiously. It may be relieved by simply throwing or swinging less—or reducing the power of those throws or swings. But if you try that remedy and the pain persists on three separate occasions afterward, it is time for a visit to the doctor.

One of the most vulnerable areas of the body is the knee, and ligament tears are among



Dr. Kerlan

the more common knee injuries. The ligament is a sort of "strap" going from bone to bone, and when it tears, the only treatment is surgery. If surgery is postponed, the complexity of the operation will increase. So, pain in the knee, excessive swelling and inability to bear weight indicate a need for immediate X rays.

And suppose you are coaching a game and a player comes to you with what appears to be a sprained, swollen ankle. Should you tape it and let him return to play? Absolutely not. He may have an epiphyseal slip—a disruption around the joint junction—which can escalate into permanent disability if he returns to the game. Get an X ray—and use ice and compression on the area until the player sees a doctor.

Shin splints, known to doctors as stress fractures, develop over a period of time. They are characterized by pain in the lower-front area of the leg. Brought on by continual stress on the area, they are best treated by rest.

Blisters, as a rule, are merely an annoying injury because they slow the player. But there's always danger that an untreated blister can become infected. If you see a red streak radiating from the blister or if the fluid in a blister is cloudy, beware. Blood poisoning may be imminent. To be safe, in this instance as in so many others, see a doctor.

OLYMPIC GOLD DIGGERS

High Pressure at the High Bar

By Seth Kaplan

Frank Jacobs may be one of America's best-known track-and-field stars, but lately the road to Moscow has been rocky for the 21-year-old high jumper. In January, 1978, Jacobs had set a world indoor record by jumping 7 feet, 7¼ inches. Attractive and articulate, he became an immediate celebrity and a good bet to win the event in the 1980 Olympics.

Then began the tribulations of being a record holder. "When you hold the record," Jacobs says, "you have to prove it every time you compete—people are always expecting you to do it again. Before I broke the record, I had no reputation to live up to. But once you're on top, you always have to worry about some other guy coming along and taking it all away."

Which is exactly what somebody—an equally attractive young Russian named Vladimir Yashchenko—did. Not long after Jacobs' indoor triumph, Yashchenko rocked the high-jump world by clearing 7 feet, 8½ inches, and he shows no signs of letting up.

Part of why Yashchenko looks so unbeatable is that in an event where the sole object is to flop or straddle or somehow fly over a bar at a greater height than one's competitors, Yashchenko stands a full seven inches taller than the 5-foot-8 Jacobs. If stature were figured into the event, Jacobs would be the undisputed world champion. He's cleared 23 inches over his head, Yashchenko only 17. But "Yashchenko has a higher center of gravity," says Olympic high jump chairman Rick

Sloan, "and that's what you're talking about in the high jump."

To make matters worse, Jacobs has been plagued by recent injuries while the pressures—or "obligations," as he prefers to call them—of being the top U.S. jumper continue. The Olympic Committee has him posing for posters and making myriad appearances to promote the Games. "They keep telling me how mandatory it is—it's like I'm a professional athlete. But I'm not, I'm not getting paid."

The college Jacobs attends, Fairleigh Dickinson in Rutherford, N.J., also has been eager to bask in the youngster's fame. Pictures of him clearing the bar have appeared on the covers of alumni bulletins and other FDU publications. People in the athletic department—Jacobs declines to name them—have urged him to compete all the time. "I have the kind of personality that says yes," he notes ruefully.

"I sort of needed to have an injury just to get a rest." Jumping so often he feels, makes him lose his competitive edge (Yashchenko makes comparatively few jumps). "You have to want to jump. You have to get hungry."

Jacobs' remarkable ability to get up in the air hinges on a single moment in approaching the bar, which Jacobs calls "explosion"—speed at planting his left heel, then toe, then pushing up and over the bar. "I know I'm the fastest at this," he says, and his conditioning is geared toward strengthening the muscles in that left foot, calf and thigh—putting more dynamite into his "explosion."

"The whole secret of the



Can Jacobs' flop (above) outleap Yashchenko's straddle?

jump is converting the speed of approach into vertical lift," says Bob Beeten, sports medicine coordinator of the U.S. Olympic team. "And at the point where Jacobs is converting, he's the fastest I've ever seen."

And Yashchenko? "His velocity at takeoff isn't all that great," says Sloan. But the Russian is an old-fashioned "straddle" jumper. He pushes off his inside foot and rolls over the bar, while Jacobs, a "flop-er," hits the outside foot and throws himself over backwards. Jacobs needs more "rock-up" speed.

This summer's outdoor meets, where Jacobs' challengers will include American jumpers Benn Fields and James Frazier as well as Greg

Joy of Canada, are of great importance to Jacobs. But he may not meet his nemesis. The Russians might hold back Yashchenko from competing against Jacobs until the final confrontation in Moscow. Their one meeting last season was inconclusive, Yashchenko jumping no higher than Jacobs but winning because he had fewer misses.

Whether or not the two jumping stars have a showdown before the big day, anything could happen in 1980. "The high jump," says Jim Santos, who will be coaching the jumpers in Moscow, "is like a poker game. Jacobs could beat Yashchenko on any given day." Franklin just says simply "By the time the Olympics come around, I'll be ready."

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Will This Be McEnroe's Wimbledon?

Tennis' newest star, John McEnroe, is on his best behavior these days, and with good reason. He's closing fast on Borg and Connors

By TONY SCHWARTZ

John McEnroe is standing court-side at Madison Square Garden dressed in a Grateful Dead T-shirt, ratty gray sweatpants and the trademark fire-engine red headband he wears to keep his strawberry blond hair out of his eyes. In a few hours he's scheduled to play Arthur Ashe in McEnroe's first match of the Colgate Grand Prix Masters—a round robin for the pro tour's eight top singles players with \$100,000 going to the winner. But right now, between practice sessions, McEnroe is impatiently parrying what he considers the inane questions of interviewers.

So his eyes keep darting about and before long he spots Arthur Ashe wandering by. An impish smile flickers across McEnroe's face.

"Good luck tonight, Artie," he yells, deadpan, to the game's elegant and enduring 35-year-old star. Ashe walks on without reply.

"I hope you play like shit," McEnroe mutters under his breath—and then grins mischievously.

If anyone can afford a little easygoing arrogance, John McEnroe can. No tennis player has ever made so awesome a professional debut at such a tender age. Consider: After winning the May 1978 NCAA singles title as a freshman, McEnroe quit college and turned pro. In just seven months he climbed to the No. 4 ranking in the world. In doubles, he and Peter Flem-

ing have a legitimate claim to the No. 1 ranking in the world. At Wimbledon in 1977, while still a little-known amateur, McEnroe had to win two preliminary matches just to qualify for the 128-player draw. He did and then raced all the way to the semifinals, at 18 the youngest player ever to do so. In his ninth match, against top seeded Jimmy Connors, McEnroe took a set before finally succumbing in four. Ironically, his second Wimbledon—his first major tournament as a pro—proved as disappointing as his first was thrilling. He played so poorly that he lost in the first round to unseeded Erik Van Dillen. But that's where the bad news ended.

At the U.S. Open last August, he reached the semifinals before bowing again to Jimmy Connors. McEnroe then won his next two tournaments (Hartford and San Francisco) in both singles and doubles (with Fleming). By the end of 1978, Junior, as the players call him, had won six doubles championships and four singles titles. He capped his extraordinary run with an astonishing 6-3, 6-2 victory over Bjorn Borg in the Stockholm Open on the Swede's hometown court—the first time Borg had ever lost to a player younger than himself. Then in December, McEnroe was the hero when the U.S. won the Davis Cup for the first time since 1972 by defeating England. In winning both his singles matches, McEnroe lost fewer total games (ten) than any player in Davis Cup history. His winnings for his first six months on the pro tour



On McEnroe's head, the Colgate Grand Masters trophy; clutched in his left hand, the \$100,000 check.

exceeded \$400,000.

Logically, McEnroe should have become an instant, authentic American sports hero. He did not. His temper garnered more attention than his fine play. In a sport with more than its share of smug, spoiled brats, McEnroe seemed the worst of them all. Even at his marvelous first Wimbledon in June 1977, McEnroe alienated fans and sportswriters by scowling at calls against him and hurling abuse at spectators. McEnroe put on his worst show almost a year later in the May '78 NCAA finals—a month before he turned pro. He insisted one umpire was "out to get him," he argued calls, delayed play and shouted back at a crowd that, understandably, had turned against him. "Both Nastase and Connors have ups and downs," veteran umpire Byron Sayre said at tournament's end. "But McEnroe is more ill-tempered and ill-mannered than either one. He never lets up."

Mary Carillo, a childhood friend of McEnroe's and now a player on the women's tour, takes a more sympathetic view of McEnroe's behavior. "John has a

McEnroe

terrific sense of fairness," she explains. "He would never take a point if he didn't deserve it. He loves the game, he loves the rules. He wants it pure, and that's the reason he gets so upset when he thinks it's not. It's like someone else is wrecking his game." Indeed, McEnroe isn't always pleading his own case: At the 1977 U.S. Open he actually was penalized for arguing a call on behalf of his opponent.

But as McEnroe grows older and more successful, he seems anxious to dispel his crybaby image. At the Davis Cup he was a model of decorum. And on this first evening of the Masters, there are no outbursts. Calmly and methodically, McEnroe overwhelms Ashe 6-3, 6-1. The victory is so effortlessly routine that the typically unflappable Arthur seems dazed at the postmatch press conference. What the writers want to know from McEnroe is how he rates his chances against Jimmy Connors the following evening. They smell the potential drama of an heir apparent playing the champ. McEnroe's disarming honesty disappoints them: "Look, he's beaten me every time we've played. He's won every major championship and I've won none. There's no reason why it should be a great match. I'm just gonna do the best I can. If I don't win, well, better luck next time."

The reception hall is filled with an older, conservatively dressed crowd, and John McEnroe seems almost comically out of place. It is two days before the Masters is scheduled to begin and most of the players have come to the Plaza Hotel for an Association of Tennis Professionals Awards Gala to benefit the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation. McEnroe is due to receive an award as "Newcomer of the Year." His plane from London had arrived only hours earlier and he is suffering from jet lag.

McEnroe heads for the bar and gulps down two drinks in something less than two minutes. His eyes scan the room for a

familiar face. Failing to find one, he heads for the hors d'oeuvres, popping down a dozen meatballs without looking up. Finally he spots Brian Gottfried and Harold Solomon in a corner and wanders off to join them.

McEnroe's father, John Sr., is sitting at a nearby table. He is a round-faced man, a corporate lawyer with the sort of build that hovers between husky and chunky. His manner is polite but direct: He is proud of his son and equally proud of being the father of such a son. "As a family, we're lucky as hell," John Sr. says enthusiastically. "We all like each other. We never had any real problems. I don't think John is too affected by all this. He's always been a pretty steady guy, never terribly unhappy and pretty phlegmatic even when he does something really marvelous. When he was playing in Stockholm against Borg I said to my wife, 'I wonder if he'll call home if he wins?' Sure enough, he didn't. We heard the result on the radio. He just takes things in stride."

This may have something to do with the fact that John Jr. did not grow up playing tennis to the exclusion of all else. Surprisingly, he had never played daily tennis year-round until his freshman year at Stanford. In high school he played on the soccer team for four years and on the basketball team for two (quitting because it frustrated him not to start) and maintained a 'B' average.

But there was no mistaking McEnroe's tennis ability as a youngster. "He had unbelievable balance, agility and eye-hand coordination," says his father. "Before he was two years old, I'd pitch him this little plastic ball and he'd hit it right back to me."

When John was eight, his parents joined the local tennis club in Douglaston, Queens. Within a month, John was playing in club tournaments and not long after that he was beating adults. At the age of 12 he was suspended from the famed Port Washington Tennis Academy for misbehaving at a tennis tournament in the Catskills (he yelled "fire" out a window at 2 a.m. and poured a pail of water on another player). "We've had our mo-

ments," his father says tersely. "I wouldn't suggest otherwise." After the suspension, his parents decided to switch John to the nearby Cove Racquet Club, under the tutelage of racket-master Tony Palafox. Today John gives substantial credit for his technique to Palafox, and continues to consult him whenever he is back in New York. Their association improved John's national ranking from No. 7 in the 12-and-unders to No. 6 in the 14s, No. 2 in the 16s and No. 2 in the 18s. It was in his 18th year that McEnroe reached the semifinals of Wimbledon.

McEnroe begins his Masters' match against Jimmy Connors the same way he had the previous evening's against Arthur Ashe—with a clean ace. McEnroe's serve has only recently become a weapon. Starting with his racket head nearly touching the court, he brings it around in a wide arc, arches back and uncorks, springy but compact. At net, he is cat-quick, lunging for putaways off shots that most players wouldn't get their rackets on. The emergence of a strong serve-and-volley game has substantially elevated McEnroe's game. Previously his strength had been his effortless-looking ground strokes. Most strong, young players like to hit out; McEnroe revels in mixing speeds and spins, dissecting and unraveling an opponent rather than overpowering him. His subtlest weapon is an intangible one—"good hands," that natural, instinctively delicate feel for the game that simply can't be taught.

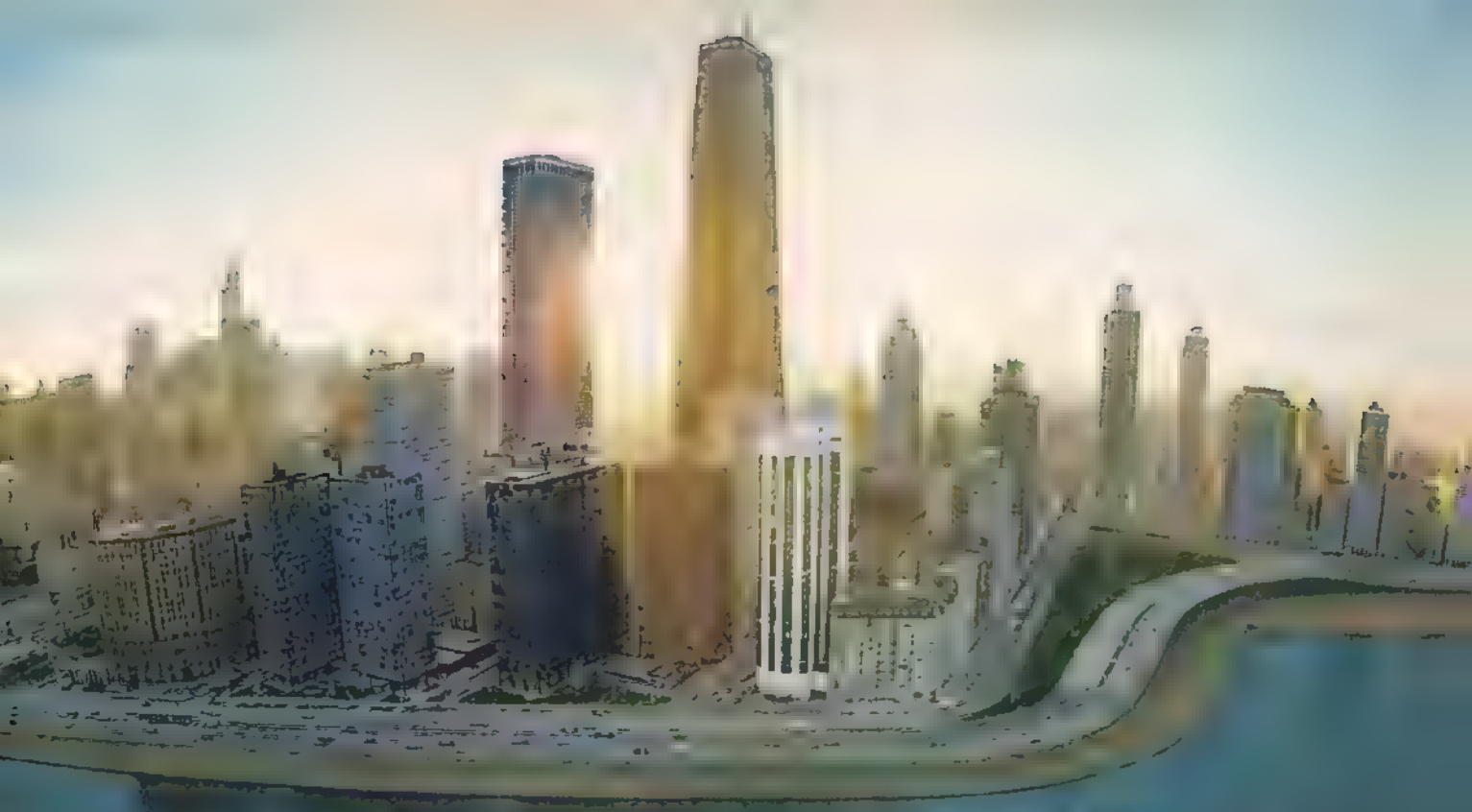
"Even when he was young he had a lot of shots," says Mary Carillo. "When everyone else was beating the ball around, John was keeping all his touch shots. He never needed to practice as much—it came so naturally to him."

In each of his four losses to Connors, McEnroe had tried to adjust his game to counter Connors' relentless assault. This time McEnroe sticks to his own game. He is double-faulting more than usual, but a strong first serve and sharp net play keep him out of danger. With strong servers like these two, a single loss of serve can be the difference in a set.

At 4-5, Connors serves to even the match. With the score 15-all, McEnroe tries a top-spin lob over Connors' head that is long. Running back to retrieve it, Connors appears to twist his ankle slightly. But he manages to hold serve, and it's 5-5. On his serve, McEnroe falls behind 0-30, yet holds on. He seems to be playing the pressure points especially well. Now Connors serves at 5-6. McEnroe battles him to deuce and then takes a short Connors return, comes in behind it and forces a Connors' error. It is set-point-McEnroe—his first break point of the evening. Connors serves, and once again McEnroe seizes on a short ball, angles a shot deep to Connors' dangerous backhand and comes to the net. Connors

"As a family," says John McEnroe Sr. (left), "we've been lucky as hell."





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McEnroe

goes for broke: He leans in and rifles his two-handed backhand cross-court. McEnroe lunges to his left, doesn't quite reach the ball and falls to the ground. He looks up in time to catch the linesman's signal. Out. First set to McEnroe.

Now the youngster's juices are flowing. In the first game of the second set he double-faults twice at 40-15, but holds on to win the game.

The next game may be the best one of the match. Although Connors gets an ad on his serve, McEnroe charges the net and hits a running forehand by him for the first deuce. Three more times the score reaches deuce, each point punctuated by spectacular exchanges. Finally McEnroe puts together consecutive approach shots and volleys two winners at net. He has broken Connors for the second successive time. Fired up, he holds serve at love for the first time in the match. It is 3-0 and Connors seems demoralized. At the changeover, Connors confers for a long time with a doctor. Finally, the umpire makes an announcement: "Mr. Connors retires. Mr. McEnroe wins 7-5, 3-love."

McEnroe tosses his racket down in apparent disgust. He wanted to finish Connors off himself. But then it dawns on him: He has just defeated Jimmy Connors for the first time in his life. He heads to the center of the court and triumphantly raises both hands overhead. The crowd, finally on his side, stands and cheers.

It turns out that Connors had developed a painful blood blister on his left foot. A doctor attests to the seriousness of the injury. McEnroe isn't gloating, but he takes the credit he is due: "I coulda lost. He had his opportunities and I hung in. He didn't break me. A win over Connors is a win. I'll take it."

John McEnroe, up close, is as ordinary a teenage kid as he is an extraordinary tennis player. A diehard rock 'n' roll fan with tastes that run to Billy Joel, Meat Loaf and the Rolling Stones, he carts along a cassette tape player wherever he travels and rarely reads a book. He seems uninterested in clothes and although he's openly delighted about his sudden wealth, he has made only two major purchases: a \$26,000 Mercedes that he has barely had an opportunity to use, and a less extravagant car he gave his brother for his 17th birthday. When he receives a check at a tournament, he immediately sends it to his father, who handles all his financial affairs. Unlike Vitas Gerulaitas, who basks in public attention, McEnroe hasn't figured out how to handle it all. He can be garrulous and witty among close friends, but he is shy and guarded with strangers. Interviews, in particular, present a problem.

"It's a hassle sometimes," he says. "I don't mind talking—it's part of my responsibility, I guess—but I wish there were some other way than going to a restaurant and trying to eat and talk while the reporter sits there taking notes. I'd like to do something different—just talk, make jokes. I'm not saying I'm so funny or anything, but I'd like the chance to just be myself. Like let's say if I was on the *Tonight Show* for 15 or 20 minutes. Not that I will be, but I'd like that."

It is, of course, McEnroe's tennis that sets him apart from other teenagers, and when he unwinds on that subject he has the insight and self-possession of someone twice his age. "I'm pretty level when it comes to winning," he says. "I try to take it like 'you can always do better.' I mean, it's great to beat Borg, but you don't want to be satisfied. If I was satisfied beating Borg in the semis I would have lost in the finals. Of course I got pleasure, but I just try to look ahead. It's the same when I lose. Although I'm not satisfied with being in the quarters, I don't get depressed. I just try to keep the

"I've handled a lot of pressure. But I like to let my playing speak for itself"

same degree on what I'm doing. When you've been playing tennis a long time like I have, you can't go crazy after winning one thing and then get all depressed if you lose the next week. It's just not advantageous.

"Am I confident on the court? Yeah. I like the way I play. I don't have any particular weaknesses. I have an all-round game. But I don't think too much when I'm playing. It's a matter of anticipation—you see your opening and you take it. You just react. I think it's the mark of a top player to be confident in tough situations. I got to the semifinals of Wimbledon and the semis of the Open. I've handled a lot of pressure. But I like to let my playing speak for itself."

McEnroe is tired when he takes the court for the finals of the Masters. As the only player who qualified in both singles and doubles, he has played more matches in the past week than any other player. In singles, after defeating Ashe and Connors, he overwhelmed Harold Solomon and Eddie Dibbs, neither one of the diminutive duo proving to be any match for McEnroe's swarming serve-and-volley game. In the previous evening's doubles final, McEnroe and Fleming easily out-punched Tom Okker and Wojtek Fibak.

6-4, 6-2, 6-4, but the match didn't end until nearly midnight. McEnroe picked up \$20,000, but the big money—\$100,000—goes to today's singles winner.

Ironically, McEnroe's opponent this Sunday afternoon is Arthur Ashe again—in the finals partly by virtue of Connor's default. But this time Ashe is better prepared, having scrutinized McEnroe's other matches. The crowd favors Ashe, but McEnroe's superlative play all week and the absence of any childish outbursts have won him an increasing share of admirers.

McEnroe dominates the start of the match—coming to the net at every opportunity, volleying crisply, holding his own serve while breaking Ashe's early in the first set. But when McEnroe double-faults three times in a row at triple set point, Ashe summons the kind of magic that lifted him to the world's No. 1 ranking in 1975 and comes back to win the tiebreaker.

McEnroe takes the next set 6-3, the momentum shifting from point to point. Late in the final set he finds himself down double match point. It is a time when most players fold up shop and head for the next tournament. McEnroe simply marshals his resources—forcing Ashe mistakes, nipping the baseline on one sensational cross-court backhand, serving hard and deep. He wins 7-5, his first major tournament victory.

Afterward, Ashe pays tribute to his young opponent. "The situation called for a special sort of toughness, and John showed it," he says.

And what of McEnroe? What was he thinking about down double match point? "I was thinking about my consolation speech," he says.

John McEnroe hasn't been thinking "consolation" much since the Masters. His play in recent months has firmly cemented his position as one of the three top players in the world, just beneath Connors and Borg. Although he didn't beat Connors again until the WCT final in May (which he won), he defeated Borg in two of their four meetings—and reached match point two times before losing one of the other two matches. Less than halfway through 1979, McEnroe's winnings passed the \$300,000 mark. Along the way, he put together the sort of extraordinary streak that is becoming his trademark: winning not only three consecutive major doubles titles (with Fleming) at New Orleans, Milan and Rotterdam, but also the singles titles at the first two, and the runner-up slot (to Borg) at the third. McEnroe, who had to qualify just to play Wimbledon two years ago, arrives this time as one of the favorites. Which is just the way John McEnroe thinks it ought to be. ■

TONY SCHWARTZ is an associate editor of *Newsweek* and a zealous tennis player.



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THE DOERS

Air Junkies

By Philip Singerman

All morning long, rain drums on the roof of the battered Volkswagen Microbus as a hang glider known only as McGrath, who has lived in the VW for almost a year, spins tales of his life in the sky. Once, McGrath remembers, he lucked into a string of thermals—the rising columns of warm air that keep gliders aloft—that took him more than 80 miles cross-country. He started out in the desert wearing cutoffs and a T-shirt, got as high as 12,000 feet where he nearly froze. He finally landed in the mountains, where he was forced to sleep in his harness because his pickup crew failed to show.

McGrath, a wiry, 27-year-old ex-Navy frogman with shoulder-length blond hair, a gold-cross earring in one ear, and pale, restless eyes, is part of a loose, knit, seminomadic tribe dwelling in vans and camperbacked pickup trucks along the California coast and in the mountains of the Southwest. Air junkies, they call themselves, spending their time soaring—suspended from great, winged kites—far above the earth.

Including McGrath, there are nine air junkies parked near the edge of a 100-foot cliff above the Pacific Ocean in southern California. They are waiting for a break in the blustery, wet weather. At quarter-past 12 the rain stops, but the wind, whipping off the ocean at nearly 40 miles an hour, continues. To land a glider in a gale like this is to risk being pulverized on the rocks like a seashell dropped by a gull, so it appears that the afternoon will be lost for flying.

McGrath, however, has been idle for two days—a personal record, he claims. At

1:30 he steps from the Microbus and crosses the barren, fissured ground to a motor home owned by a good friend of his, a red-haired woman named Denise. She is eating freshly baked chocolate-chip cookies and offers a plateful to McGrath. "I'm going to set up," he tells her between bites. "I think it'll be soarable in just a bit." Denise looks at him in disbelief. She is familiar with the feats of air junkies, having followed them for two years, but three days before, at this same site, she saw another pilot die—dashed against the side of the cliff when his glider's wing collapsed. "You're crazy, McGrath," she says, but grabs a parka and ski hat and prepares to lend a hand.

They unstrap the furled glider from the roof of the VW, fit together the pieces of aircraft-grade aluminum, tighten stainless steel guy wires, and insert battens in the 34-foot, red-and-blue, Dacron sail. When they finish, the glider resembles a brightly colored bat, from the center of which hangs the triangular metal tubing that controls its flight.

An hour later, on a platform built out over the edge of the cliff, McGrath hangs horizontally from the glider's rigging, hovering six inches above the platform, waiting to launch. Denise, keeping the glider earthbound till McGrath is ready, holds down the kite's nose while two other air junkies steady the wing. They fight to maintain their balance as the wind tries to tear the glider from their hands. Far below, the ocean seethes cold and foreboding; above, dark clouds obscure the sun. Then suddenly the gale slackens.

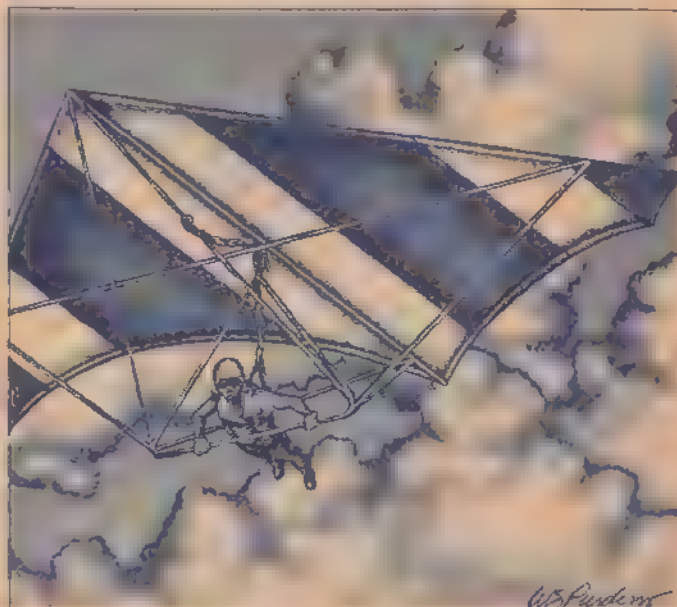
"Now!" McGrath shouts; the glider's nose is raised, the wing tips are released, and with a rush that almost tumbles the attendants over the cliff, the glider is driven by the wind up over Denise's head and McGrath is airborne.

In an instant he is 100 feet above the cliff, scudding down the coast as he rises until he is only a speck against the clouds far to the south. Then he returns, working his way north on the powerful currents of air swirling, diving, banking in long graceful arcs, he soars past the cliffs, his body arched supplely beneath the outstretched wings. The other air junkies gather near the launching platform, and for a second McGrath hovers high above

beginning to have some fun."

In and out he soars, like a running back looking for a hole in the line, angling toward the cliff, then pulling away, sweeping half a mile offshore, then shooting inland, until finally, just as the sky opens in a torrential downpour, he skims low over the cliff's nose, and lands lightly on his feet in a virtuoso performance.

That evening, over a bowl of stew in the motor home, McGrath dismisses the flight as routine. "I've been up around 18,000 feet and felt like I was the only creature left in the universe," he says. "I've floated for hours, alone in the sky, searching for thermals like a shark hunting for food deep in the ocean. Maybe I'll lose my



them and salutes, but a sudden gust catches the glider and the next moment he is gone.

The gale intensifies once more, buffeting the kite, beating McGrath down the coast as thunderheads roll in behind him. "He's in trouble," someone yells. "He can't land. He'll be up there all night and freeze to death." "Lightning!" shouts another spectator. "He'll get french fried."

"Anyone else'd be petrified right now," Diane says, "but knowing McGrath, he's just

lift and start falling closer to the ground and then bang, I hit a thermal and it's like I'm Superman. That's flying. That's why I go hang gliding."

When the sun burns the fog from the cliff the following morning, McGrath's bus is gone. "You never know with him," Denise says. "He could be in Arizona, Mexico, or he could've caught a plane to Peru. As long as there's something to jump off of, and a thermal to keep a kite in the air, there's always a chance you'll see McGrath."

VIEWPOINT

A Fan's Notes on Fans

By Harry Stein

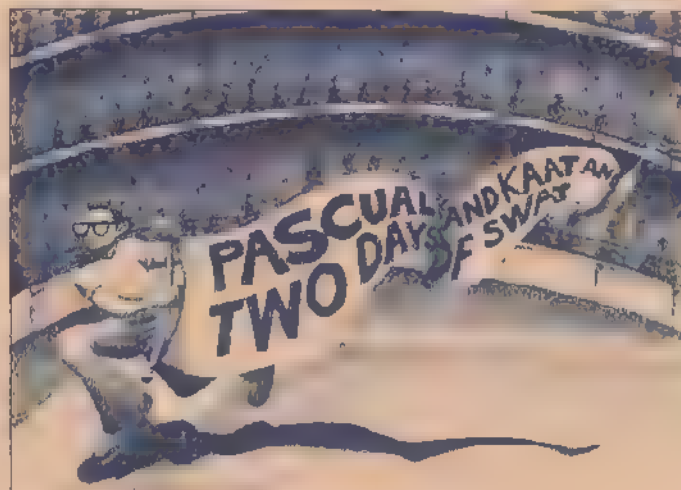
In 1957, when it was announced that the Dodgers and Giants would be leaving New York for the West Coast, thousands of New Yorkers instantly became Dodger-haters and Giant-haters. And they were right. Back then there was something like a sacred contract between teams and fans, a loyalty that persisted season after season, in rotten times as well as good. The Dodgers and Giants, in deserting their fans, had killed a romance as surely as any lover who throws over a fiancé.

But times have changed and so have sports fans. These days, more often than not, it is the fans who do the jilting—and they do it with an alacrity and casualness that would probably make even Walter O'Malley blush. And I, for one, wish it weren't so.

Back in 1955 when I was six years old, I became a Washington Senators fan. The reason for this sudden allegiance was entirely sound: My brother who was seven, had just become a Washington Senators fan. The reason my brother had become a Washington Senators fan was equally convincing: Bobby May, who lived up the block and, as an 11-year-old jock/scholar was a figure who commanded much respect, had become a Senators fan the year before, shortly after purchasing a glove bearing the signature of the Senators' only legitimate hitter, Roy Sievers.

The timing of our mass conversion was not, in retrospect, fortuitous. The American League was dominated in

those years, as in these, by the Yankees—baseball's equivalent to Price-Waterhouse—who seemed to move efficiently through every season, win the World Series, go home, take off their pinstripes and have a martini. The Senators, in contrast, were a hodgepodge collection of bozos who, year after year aspired to



nothing more than competence, and aspired in vain.

Still, I loved them, loved them as much as I loathed the arrogant Yankees. I rooted for the Senators simply because I did, mindlessly, blindly.

And when, in 1965, the Senators, by then renamed the Twins and relocated in the wilds of Minnesota, at last surged past competence past respectability, past the declining Yankees to the American League pennant, I viewed it as an event of monstrous import (I even lugged a ten foot banner to Yankee Stadium bearing my very own slogan for that lovably muscular Twine team: "Pascual and Kaat, and two days of SWAT.")

My messiah had arrived, my faith was vindicated.

Even now, 14 years later, with the Twins exposed as the most racist team in baseball I cannot bring myself to dump on them. Nor has my contempt for the Yankees faded; this era's crop may be more colorful than their predecessors, but they are still Yankees—and the Yankees are The Enemy.

But it's the damndest thing very few people see it that way now. Last fall, returning to New York after almost two years abroad, I was stunned to discover that almost everyone was a Yankee fan.

"Why?" I asked my friend Caveman formerly a devoted

have their gratification put off? Still, it saddened me to be told by a friend I respect that this season he would be rooting for the Yankees, Rangers, Dodgers and Phillies—the pre-season favorites in each of the major leagues' four divisions. He explained his reasoning with disarming candor: "I don't like to be disappointed."

But, of course, being disappointed is what fans have always been about. Without years of aggravation and frustration, there can be no revelation. The erupting passions at the Mets' startling triumphs of 1969 were, for Mets fans, a reaction to nine years of derision inflicted upon them and their team by the rest of the nation. Should the Yankees breeze to another championship in 1979, there will not, I guarantee, be a single Yankee fan who feels anything like what those patient Mets fans felt that golden autumn.

The human spirit being what it is, though, there is hope still. Just last week I was standing along the first-base line of an asphalt diamond in a Manhattan schoolyard, watching a bunch of eight-year-olds play stickball. The first batter identified himself as Reggie Jackson, the next as Lou Piniella, the third as Bucky Dent. But then a black kid wearing a faded Montreal Expos cap moved up to the plate. "I'm Warren Cromartie," he announced, and slashed a single to leftfield.

I asked him as he stood on first, "You're an Expo fan?"

"Damn straight I am."

"Why?"

He kept his eye on the pitcher as he answered. "What you mean 'why'? I like 'em, that's why."

And with that he went tearing off to second, screaming as he went, "Warren Cromartie's a runnin' fool."

HARRY STEIN is a writer living in New York who is at work on his first novel—largely the memoirs of a nine-year-old sportswriter.

In 1941, Joe DiMaggio was the class of the New York Yankees—a hero in the pinstriped tradition of Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig. His credentials were impressive: a .343 batting average for five major-league seasons and a reputation as an accomplished centerfielder. At bat or in the field, Joe D played with a fluid grace that only truly gifted athletes possess. It made his game appear effortless.

When DiMaggio singled off White Sox pitcher Eddie Smith on May 15, 1941, and then hit



Voice-of-the-Yankees Mel Allen

safely in every Yankee game the rest of the month, it was business as usual. "It wasn't until Joe got hits in 25-or-so straight games," recalls broadcaster Mel Allen, for decades known as the Voice of the Yankees, "that the streak started to be a phenomenon. Then the newspaper guys wondered if DiMag could break the American League hitting-streak record of 41 games set by George Sisler in 1922, and the major-league record of 44 straight games, set by Wee Willie Keeler in 1897."

Batting in his spread stance, with the familiar sweeping swing, DiMaggio cracked out base hits game after game, entraining a nation and his teammates as well. "The Yankee players," says Allen, "really were pulling for DiMag. I'll never forget Frank Crosetti, the Yankee shortstop, sitting next to me in the radio booth on a

REPLAY

Joltin' Joe's Streak

By Glenn Lewis

day when he was injured and couldn't play. That game, DiMaggio had gone hitless in a couple of at-bats. He comes up the next time, the count was 3 and 0. All of a sudden I'm almost knocked out of my seat by an elbow in my ribs. Crosetti, in his excitement, had noticed the coach's signal. He elbowed me and whispered 'He's got the hit sign!' He was as excited as a kid, more so when Joe got a hit.

"Well, let me tell ya, that's how the whole club felt about DiMaggio. Take what happened on June 26, the 38th game of the streak. Joe was hitless going into the eighth inning of a game against the St. Louis Browns. With a man on first and one out, Tommy Henrich was due at bat. Henrich didn't want to risk hitting into a double play and blowing Joe's chance to hit, so he asked the manager, Joe McCarthy, if he could bunt the runner along. The Yanks were leading 3-1 at the time, so McCarthy said okay. Henrich sacrificed—and, presto, Joe D whacked a double to keep the streak alive."

By late June, DiMaggio's hitting streak had become a national preoccupation. Newspapers featured a daily front-page box recording Joe's progress. Radio programs were frequently interrupted to report DiMaggio's latest hit.

On June 29, using Henrich's bat—a fan had stolen Joe's—he singled and broke Sisler's A.L. record. His bat was returned. The streak continued, with the pressure unabated. "It was," says Allen, "like the kick some people get out of a detective story. When was it going to end? How was it going to end?"

It did not end on July 2: On

that day, DiMaggio hit a home run against the Red Sox to break Keeler's record. "You began to think," says Allen, "that he might be able to hit safely for the rest of the season. I know that sounds silly. But . . . this is DiMaggio."

And to Mel Allen, Joe D was special. "You see," he says, "as much pressure as there was during the streak—and heaven knows there was plenty—Joe didn't show the effects of it. Forty-five, 46, 47,

series in July, the Browns trumpeted. "The Sensational Joe DiMaggio Will Attempt to Hit Safely in His 49th Consecutive Game!"

On July 17, with the streak at 56 games, DiMaggio continued pounding the ball. Against Cleveland pitcher Al Smith, he twice hit screamers down the third-base line, but on this night the fates conspired against Joe D. Both times, Indian third baseman Ken Keltner made acrobatic plays and threw DiMaggio out. Joe D went hitless for the game, the streak was over.

Ended, it was not forgotten. Indeed, the memory of it lingers still. In the 38 years since Joe DiMaggio's streak captivated the nation, nobody



DiMaggio only moments before his 56-game hitting streak ends

48 straight games with a hit, and still he was the same DiMag. He never threw his cap down in anger or kicked a base if he was robbed of a hit. That sort of thing was inconceivable for him, DiMaggio was class."

DiMaggio became a national hero. A song, "Joltin' Joe DiMaggio," was written about him; rival teams began advertising Joe D instead of their own players. For a weekend

has broken the record. Pete Rose came the closest of any modern player when he hit safely in 44 games last year. To this day, Joe D's feat remains special.

Back in the summer of '41, it seemed special to DiMaggio's teammates. One night late in August they held a surprise party for Joe, presenting him with a sterling silver humidor from Tiffany's. Or, as Mel Allen puts it, "Class for class."

SPORT Quiz

GRADE YOURSELF
18-20 EXCELLENT
15-17 VERY GOOD
12-14 FAIR



Margaret Court

1. Who is the only N.L. player to get four hits in an All-star Game?

- a. Stan Musial
- b. Joe Medwick
- c. Ernie Banks

2. Who was the only pitcher to pitch more than five innings in an All-Star Game?

- a. Lefty Gomez
- b. Dizzy Dean
- c. Don Drysdale

3. Who was the only player to steal home in an All-Star Game?

- a. Pie Traynor
- b. Willie Mays
- c. Marty Marion

4. Name the only N.L. city that never hosted an All-Star Game.

5. Which pitcher has not given up at least four All-Star Game home runs?

- a. Vida Blue
- b. Jim Palmer
- c. Catfish Hunter

6. Match these N.L. catchers with the players who they succeeded at their positions

- a. J. Bench 1. T. McCarver
- b. B. Boone 2. J. Ferguson
- c. T. Simmons 3. J. Bateman
- d. S. Yeager 4. J. Edwards

7. What major-league records did Jerry Grote and Tom Seaver of the Mets set on April 22, 1970?

8. Prior to the 1979 season, who had appeared in the most games (715) of all active pitchers?

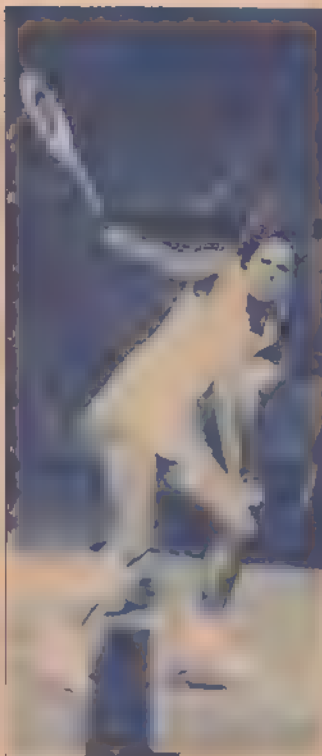
- a. Jim Kaat
- b. Darold Knowles
- c. Gaylord Perry



Rosie Casals

9. Which team put the same infield in the opening-day lineup for at least five straight seasons?

- a. L.A. Dodgers—1974-79
- b. Chicago Cubs—1965-69
- c. Baltimore Orioles—1968-72



Evonne Goolagong

10. Name the only player in baseball history to make the final out in two no-hitters pitched by the same pitcher

11. Which major-league season fielding record for third basemen does Graig Nettles not hold?

- a. most assists
- b. most double plays
- c. highest fielding percentage

12. Whose record for most strikeouts (15) in a major-league debut did J.R. Richard tie in 1971?

- a. Jim Maloney
- b. Karl Spooner
- c. Bobo Newsom

13. Who is the only NFL quarterback to have recorded a higher completion percentage for one season than Ken Stabler?

- a. Sammy Baugh
- b. Len Dawson
- c. Bart Starr

14. Ken Stabler holds the NFL record for the highest completion percentage

- a. in a game
- b. in a career
- c. in a playoff game

15. Who is the only tennis player since 1960 to win more Wimbledon titles (four) than Bjorn Borg (three)?

- a. Roy Emerson
- b. John Newcombe
- c. Rod Laver

16. Which tennis player has never won a Wimbledon singles title?

- a. Evonne Goolagong
- b. Rosie Casals
- c. Margaret Court

17. Who was Chris Evert's partner the only time she won a Wimbledon doubles title?

- a. Martina Navratilova
- b. Billie Jean King
- c. Wendy Turnbull

18. Name the four Houston Rockets who finished in the top ten in free-throw percentage in the NBA in 1978-79

19. Which NHL goalie had the most regular-season wins (32) in 1978-79?

- a. Ken Dryden
- b. Dan Bouchard
- c. Gerry Cheevers



20. The player pictured above, who later became a manager, holds the all-time record for the most games played (1,918) as a catcher in the major leagues. What is his name?

For answers turn to page 79

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Montreal's Ellis Valentine is a young outfielder with a flare for the game—and for fines and fracas as well. Now beset by disciplinary woes, he's struggling to conform to his own maxim that...

"One Stone Don't Tip No Mountain"

By JOHN ESKOW

In the shadows of the Calamity Bar the night is just beginning, and Ellis Valentine looks fully prepared. As he lounges at a back table, his 6-foot-4 inches swathed in a mint-green track suit with matching golf cap, smoking Kools and drinking vodka and lime—no doubt thinking mint-green thoughts to maintain the color scheme—he eyes an aging blond at the bar. She plays that sensual cat-and-mouse that's second only to darts as a barroom game. Valentine tilts back the golf cap—which has "Dallas Cowboy Cheerleaders" in green stitching—to allow her a better look. His Afro is cropped to the length of his beard, in the style of his idol, Pittsburgh outfielder Dave Parker. Valentine's teeth could double as lighthouse beacons. And the style is easy, laconic "I'm not into YMCA macho," he says as he raises his eyebrows. "My macho is different. It's not bulky. If she don't want me, groovy, there's always another house down the road." But under his jocular cool a fire simmers; the blond feels it and turns toward it. There's something very curious about Ellis Valentine.

The Calamity Bar, near the Montreal Expos' spring-training camp in Daytona Beach, is an aptly named hangout for Valentine: To date, he's better known for his calamitous moments than for his unquestioned baseball skills. Though he's thought by many to have the best throwing arm in the game, though he won a Gold Glove in rightfield last season, though he has averaged 25 home runs and 76 RBIs in his two full seasons in the majors and sports a lifetime batting average of .290, many fans remember him best for his explosive outbursts of temper or carelessness on the field, bursts of flame from beneath his cool veneer. Valentine's major-league statistics prior to this season included a brawl with former Cubs catcher Dave Rader, and a complex incident herein to be known as The Phantom

Home Run Caper.

The Rader brawl, in 1978, provided baseball with an event rarer than a triple play—a fight in which actual blows were landed. And the Phantom Home Run in Montreal last September—after which Valentine was benched and fined for lack of hustle—raised fresh questions about his "attitude" toward playing ball.

But Valentine is a sensitive man, slow to forget an affront, and though popular with fans and teammates, he retains some outrage about the Montreal organization's "attitude" toward him, the way they took so long bringing him up from the minors.

"He's an enigma," one top club official says. "On the one hand, he could easily be the next Bobby Bonds; he's got all the tools and more. On the other hand, he's easily led; he's been a boy all his life. He's lovable and exasperating at the same time. No way to tell which way he'll go."

Today, in training camp, the question was raised again. Ellis had a slight foot injury, the result of a foul tip off his instep, and he took it easy—so easy, in fact, that manager Dick Williams trekked into the clubhouse after him this morning, shouting, "Come on out, Ellis, we don't have individual workouts here." Ellis nodded and trotted down the runway to do wind sprints.

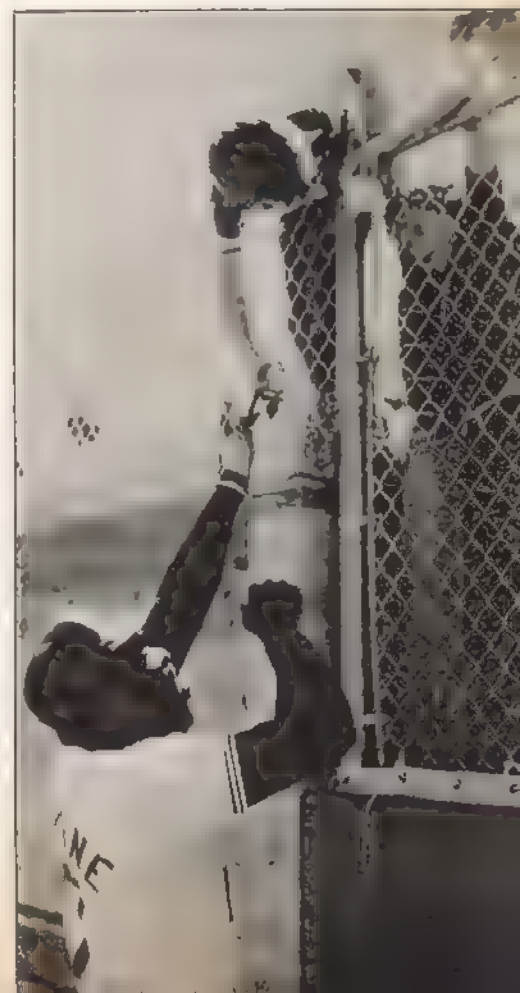
"Look," he says in the Calamity, "I get my energy from my own source. I don't tag much with the other dudes. And here it's only spring training—I don't want to burn off all my juice too quick. That's the trouble with management—they put some petty stuff in front of you, things that distract your mind from the pure, ultimate thought of kicking ass."

"I look at baseball as an outdoor game of enjoying yourself—in which you go out to express yourself with muscles and thoughts. Coaches and management have one plan for *all*, which doesn't seem human to me. But I guess I have to deal with it. One stone don't tip no mountain."

As he shrugs and sips his vodka, you

try to put his complaints in perspective. He is only 24. He makes over \$175,000 a year, on a one-year contract with incentive clauses that could nose the total over \$200,000. Along with Andre Dawson and Warren Cromartie (who tied him for most assists by an outfielder last year with 24), he's a member of the best young outfield in baseball. He consorts with a number of delectable ladies; "Every time he goes down to Daytona Beach," says a clerk at his hotel, "we get three or four cuties in here asking for his room number." You might deduce that Ellis Valentine is a

Valentine may have his problems with the Expos' management, but he's relaxed and cordial with teammates and fans



Valentine

happy man, and often he seems to be just that. But hostilities simmer.

Ellis now seems on cordial terms with team officials, but in his conversation he always circles back to his problems with "management." The strains of discord were most in evidence last September in Montreal, when the celebrated Phantom Home Run incident hit the papers.

Valentine, like some other sluggers, has taken to watching his own homers clear the fence—it's the summer-game's equivalent to spiking footballs in the end zone. Most fans are familiar with the Reggie Jackson mode—in which the batter waltzes two steps toward first base, then flings the bat away disdainfully as if to say, "I just use this bat for show—I could've hit it out with my bare hands." Valentine has a different ritual: He maintains his grip on the bat and stands transfixed at home plate, delighting in the arc of the white pellet through the sky. On this occasion, in the fourth inning of a 1-1 game against the Phillies, he connected with a Dick Ruthven fastball, drove it toward the leftfield stands, and stood happily observing. Unfortunately for Ellis, the ball hit the fence, very much in play. Valentine bucked from homeplate like a deer startled by gunfire at a quiet pond.

While centerfielder Garry Maddox misplayed the ball, Valentine reached second base amid a deluge of boos. The boos were strange music to Ellis, who prefers Marvin Gaye and Parliament-Funkadelic, and who's long been a favorite of the Montreal fans. The derision got even louder a moment later when he compounded his mistake by wandering off second base and getting picked off before a pitch was thrown.

"I hit the ball 390 feet off the wall," Ellis says now. "I thought it was gone, okay, but it just missed. At least I hit it. Then I was looking to steal third, to atone, and I got picked off. See, they rely on me a lot here, and they get frustrated if I don't do it every day. By the same token, the money's not sufficient. But it was my mistake, to let my contract hassles spill onto the field."

Whatever the reason for his behavior, Valentine further upset the fans as he came off the field by lifting his hands in a "what-do-you-want-from-me" gesture, a choice phrase of body language he repeated from the runway after Dick Williams ordered him to the showers. Most observers saw Valentine's raised hands as a pantomime of contempt. Ellis recalls it like this: "When I came off, I gestured like, 'Come on, gimme the boos, I deserve to be booed, I need every bit.' Look, man, I *knew* I was horseshit. And they were getting off on booin' me. Cool. We weren't about to win no pennant, and

one way or another you're supposed to entertain them."

He was fined \$500 for the incident. "That didn't bother me," he smiles. "I was fined a lot last year." How many times? "Aw, man, I lost count." But with this episode he also became the first player to be suspended in Expo history; and because it happened on a slow day for sports news, he also became an item for devotees of baseball scandal.

That night, in a typical Valentine turnaround, he called two local radio talkshows to apologize to the Montreal fans. By now they've forgiven him the outburst; the man voted "Most Popular Expo" last year has returned to the city's good graces. To his credit, he speaks openly about the event, refusing to gloss over it. "You learn by f— up, right? And I can't blame people for always bringing up the subject. It wasn't no fantasy. It was a for-real deal. I blew it."

Spring training, with its sleepy aura, dulls the anger he felt back then, and for a while Ellis sounds carefree. We're sitting in the Expos' clubhouse, where a soft breeze toys with the soiled uniforms. City Island Park is surrounded by water, and today the world seems to move at the drowsy pace of the palm fronds drifting down the Halifax River. It's a good day to forget old scores and conflicts, to hum a Marvin Gaye tune in the sunlight, to lace the spikes tight and jog outside across the greenery—which is just what Valentine does before stepping into the cage to take batting practice.

At the plate, Ellis is a swashbuckler with a wide-open stance who flashes wide smiles to the box-seat fans; a free-swinging, let's-get-it-on kind of hitter who led the team with 11 game-winning RBIs last year; a showboat who gives the bat a Mickey Rivers backflip when he swings and misses. In the field he's got that Gold Glove sureness—he gets an excellent jump on fly balls, and has a throwing motion that's as compact as a karate chop.

With a bat in his hands, Valentine is part showboat and part swashbuckler.



He's been a legend in major-league clubhouses for his throwing ever since his rookie year, 1976, when St. Louis catcher Ted Simmons announced to reporters: "The word is out. You do not run on Ellis Valentine." His throws are wondrous to behold—fast, straight and true as heat-seeking missiles. Dick Williams has compared Valentine's arm with those of Roberto Clemente and Carl Furillo. Expos broadcaster Duke Snider calls Valentine "a truly great outfielder" and recalls a Valentine throw on the fly from deep right that nailed a runner by three feet at home. "Remember Willie Mays' throw to get [the Dodgers'] Billy Cox at the plate in 1951?" Snider says. "Valentine's was better."

"I always could throw," Ellis once told Montreal sportswriter Ian MacDonald. "I was throwing footballs, baseballs, rocks, bottles, it didn't matter. It was just something to do when we were kids, having rock fights, just having fun—enjoying the physical fun of throwing things."

Valentine grew up in West Los Angeles, a poor kid blessed with raw ability. At Crenshaw High School he was a Bob Gibson-style pitcher who also played every position except catcher ("I didn't like the idea of getting behind the plate"). In his junior year he batted .542, but in his senior year he broke his left leg. The resulting concern among scouts caused them to bypass Ellis in the first round of the draft. The Expos got him on the second round and began to move him slowly through their farm system at a rate that infuriated him.

He spent his first three years, from 1972-74, in the low minors. In 1975, playing with Memphis, he led the International League in runs, hits, doubles and total bases while two other Expos prospects, catcher Gary Carter and third baseman Larry Parrish, got full shots as rookies with the big club. The Expos brought Valentine up at the end of the '75 season, but in 1976, they sent him back down to Denver (Triple A) where he hit .309 in 57 games before being recalled.

"We may have brought him up too slowly," a club official admits. "But Carter and Parrish were so spectacular that first year, we couldn't keep three rookies—so we sent Ellis down. Maybe it was a mistake."

"That's an understatement," Ellis snorts. He resents the fact that the Expos were lavishing most of their enthusiasm on Gary Carter. Carter's tendency to run full tilt into walls grabbed attention, while Ellis—still wary due to his long recuperation from the broken leg—was seen as something of an "attitude problem." While Carter was presented as a paragon of Christian virtue, Ellis was rumored to be eccentric, and the conflict persists.

"I have no problem with Gary Carter," Valentine says, "but the way management handled that deal showed me up

front that they didn't respect me as a worker. I should have been starting at 20. I didn't get a full shot at being Rookie of the Year because they fell all over Carter. Now I ain't gonna run into no brick wall for no baseball and spill my brains all over the warning track." He pauses, contemplating the insanity of it, and lets out a falsetto giggle. "Me, spill the Valentine brains on some dirty warning track? No way!"

Valentine's conflicts with "management" are not confined to the Montreal front office. Sitting by his locker before a spring-training game, he describes a pattern of callous indifference to the "workers" running through all baseball's executive suites. "Take AstroTurf—man, that stuff hurts. You get jolts and jars with every diving catch, with every single quick step you take. They give us artificial turf—but we're real. We still got to go home and eat the grits and gravy every night. I never yet saw a ballplayer feed off electricity, put his mouth to a socket." He shakes his head. "Man, doctors say you shouldn't even jog on AstroTurf, and we're supposed to make our living on it. A half-inch of padded concrete."

As Ellis indicts the big-league brass, teammate Rudy May and other players shout "Amens!"

"Tell 'em, Tino!"

"Rap it, El!"

There's obvious affection for Valentine, which he returns in kind. "The guys on this team are good people," he says. "They tease me like a baby when I'm hurt—which shows me they care. Take Steve Rogers. Man, what a pitcher. Never seen anyone like him for consistency and brains. But beyond that, he's a helluva guy, and he works hard at being a fine person. He knows I trust and believe in him. He knows he's loved by me."

Across the clubhouse, a coven of reporters surrounds newly acquired pitcher Bill Lee, pestering him for fresh details on the marijuana "scandal" he's engendered, asking him a bunch of idiotic questions such as, "How do you feel about being an outlaw?" Last week Lee admitted his use of grass as a spice in cooking, joining such other self-confessed dope fiends as Mary Tyler Moore. Commissioner Bowie Kuhn has promised a "full investigation" of the Lee cupboard (which led to a \$250 fine), making himself somewhat of a laughingstock in the Expo clubhouse.

"Yeah," Lee says to the writers, "Bowie was down here last week, wearing his Dwight Eisenhower look-alike face, checking things out. . . ."

Valentine laughs and watches the reporters grill Lee. But the smile hardens on Valentine's face; beneath the jiving hy-play at Lee's locker a generational war of lifestyles and values rages, and Ellis himself has been caught in the crossfire. "I don't know what they look for in us," he

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Warning: The Surgeon General Has Determined That Cigarette Smoking Is Dangerous to Your Health.

Valentine

says. "I don't care if you snort leather buttons, mushrooms or bottlecaps, as long as you can play. Management doesn't pay us to walk a certain way or dress or cross the street a certain way. This model citizen routine has got to go. My job is *baseball*. If they want to find out about my personal, inner self, what I do at home, marry me! Right?"

Meanwhile, back across the locker-room, Lee's rejoinders to the reporters' questions earn him wild hoots of approval from the other players, Rudy May and Dave Cash troop past to slap him five. It occurs to me that a white free-spirit is regarded as a "flake," while a black free spirit is called a "troublemaker."

"Definitely," Valentine says. "It's the All-American Get-Back. There's a tendency to see any black who behaves a certain way as a 'militant pusher' or some such nonsense. To me, it's a very elementary question. Stay away from anything that messes up your game. All I see in Bill Lee is a dude who works hard on the field. That's enough. As for reporters asking players, do you do this or that, man, that's petty—crumb-grabbin'."

Ellis is determined to play the game his way. Ample and spontaneous evidence of this occurred in the summer of 1978, when Valentine scuffled with the Cubs' veteran catcher Dave Rader (now with the Phillies) over a beanball incident. Like the Phantom Home Run Caper, this episode sprang from Ellis' penchant for watching his home run shots clear the fences.

"I get off on a home run," Ellis explains. "When I watch it go, it's not a put-down of the pitcher. Man, I showed the pitcher up when the ball went *out*, not by *watchin'* it go."

"Anyhow, I'd hit one off Dennis Lamp, and I guess he didn't like it, 'cause next time he threw two straight fastballs at my head. Now, that ball is *hard*. I don't want it breaking my face. When a guy throws at me two straight times he knows, and the catcher knows. After the second pitch, I said to Rader, 'Man, I didn't come out here to play *dodgeball*.' After the third one straight at my head, I said, 'One more, and you and I are gonna tussle.'"

"The three-and-oh pitch was right down the middle, but the three-and-one pitch came straight at my chest. Four out of five, straight at me. Those odds are persuasive. I ain't gonna die by gettin' hit in the face by Dennis Lamp. By the same token, I'm not running out to the mound to get sucker-punched from behind by the catcher. And I'm not swinging a bat at nobody. I'm going at you with what God gave me—fists. It brought out a little bit of nutsy cuckoo in me."

"I wanted Rader, but he wouldn't take

his mask off. I had to knock it off for him, and then we got into it at the plate. Then a lot of Cubs jumped on top of me, which made me think they had the whole thing planned."

"But I think I taught them something. Baseball is a game of trial and error. If a pitcher throws you a low-outside fastball in a certain situation and you hit a homer, he ain't gonna do it again. If a pitcher throws at your head and you respond by kicking ass, he ain't gonna do it again."

"If I don't defend myself, I'll turn into one of those 'No-Idea' dudes."

What's a "No-Idea" dude?

"One of those guys who doesn't belong in the big leagues. On the back of his baseball card it oughta read: 'NO IDEA—NO IDEA WHAT THIS DUDE DOES.'"

That inscription will never be found on the back of Valentine's card; everyone has an idea of what he does, even if it's distorted. But the Montreal Expos as a whole have been a kind of "No Idea" team. Now in their 11th year, they have yet to play .500 ball for a season. Their

"Me, spill the Valentine brains on some dirty warning track? No way!"

two chief weaknesses have been the bullpen and the bench. Last year, their pinch-hitters batted a measly .165.

"We had a *great* pinch-hitter a few years ago," says Ellis, "a guy named Jose Morales. [Morales set the major-league record for most pinch-hits—25—with Montreal in 1976.] But we traded him to Minnesota [where Morales hit .314 last year], and you know what we got in return?" He snorts and shakes his head. "A fat bag of batting-practice balls. Money, they call it. You trade a human being for a bag of scuffed balls and call it 'business.'"

"Anyhow, I'm just happy we got Elias Sosa and Bill Lee to help out our pitching this year," he says, his mood suddenly changing. "I really think we have a shot at a pennant this year. We've got a great bunch of players," he says, watching my cigarette ash grow to precarious lengths, "which is hip, because if we win the pennant they're gonna put ashtrays in the clubhouse, and you won't have to dump your ashes on the floor."

For all his criticisms, Valentine is basically an upbeat guy; his railery is constantly relieved by humor. If he can hold on to his passion for the game, he stands a good chance of becoming the kind of player that his friend Dave Parker is.

"Dave and I spend a lot of time rap-

ping," he says. "I compare myself to him in every aspect. Man, I dig when Dave Parker walks out of that dugout in that yellow Pirate uniform, big as a school bus. I got my style of bat, a 36-ounce job, from Dave. But more importantly, I try to be like him as far as being superstar people. I used to grind my brain too much, and Dave helped me with that."

Ellis seems particularly taken with the Parker salary—which, at roughly \$1-million a year, is the realm in which he feels he'll soon belong. Money signifies respect to Valentine, and his craving for respect outweighs everything else. Some people connected with the Expos feel that Ellis is a victim of the too-much-too-soon syndrome: The ghetto kid suddenly turns wealthy and develops an "attitude." But this syndrome is hardly unique to ghetto kids—middle-aged white folks are prone to it too—and there may be tinges of racism in that perception of Valentine.

This year should prove to be a pivotal one for Valentine and the Expos as well. What are his dreams for this season? "To keep fear in the hearts of runners, for one thing," he says, rubbing his massive hands together. "I like to throw out the fastest guy on each squad, then the rest is downhill. Like shooting the lead buffalo, and then the whole herd runs away. A specific goal? I wish Frank Taveras [fleece Mets shortstop who stole 46 bases last year] would run on me. I WANT TAVERAS TO RUN! And I want to play in harmony with my teammates, to get a winning thing going. I want to stay an up person. 'cause if I come on mopin', bitchy, hollerin' and crabby, the other dudes will pick it up. I ain't a ragger, man, and I don't want to become one. Most importantly, I want to keep digging the game, to keep digging the life."

Unfortunately for Ellis, not three weeks into the season, he came on bitchy and hollerin' a little too strongly at N.L. substitute umpire Steve Fields during a game against the Cubs at Wrigley Field. Fields called Valentine out at second on a pickoff play for the final out in the eighth inning, and Ellis, taking batting helmet in hand, unloosed his famous throwing arm and sent the helmet sailing close enough to Fields so that the umpire ejected him from the game. Enraged, Valentine then bumped Fields and was subsequently fined \$500 and suspended for three games by the league.

It was impossible to get a reaction from Ellis because he was refusing to talk to writers. A month earlier, as he sat in the Calamity Bar, Ellis had tugged at his mint-green cap, sipped his vodka-and-lime and undoubtedly offered his final word on such subjects. "Don't worry," he smiled. "They ain't gonna stop me from having fun." ■

JOHN ESKOW is a freelancer who specializes in popular culture and sports.

1

3

2

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REMEMBRANCES OF All-Star Games PAST



As baseball presents its 50th All-Star Game, a potpourri of aging photos reminds us of the boundless talents who have graced this memorable contest

On July 17, baseball celebrates the 50th renewal of the best idea a sportswriter ever had when a fan-filled Seattle Kingdome and a worldwide television audience in the millions view the 1979 All-Star Game. If things run according to form, they'll watch the National League beat the American League for the 16th time in the last 17 meetings. But that's only one thing some people have come to expect from the All-Star Game. To the more cynical baseball critics, All-Star Games in recent years have been for All-Stars who don't show up, All-Stars who show up but would rather be elsewhere, and managers who put All-Stars on their teams who *should* be elsewhere. And while these things may hold true again this year, the real magic of the All-Star Game is that future generations won't remember any of the silly sidelights. The memories will be of this year's freeze-frame moments that are the essence of

baseball: the individual confrontation of superstar pitted against superstar.

All-Star Games have provided some of the best memories in baseball history—many of them are highlighted on these pages. While a World Series can make a short term hero out of a Billy Martin or a Bucky Dent, an All-Star Game makes lasting heroes, lasting memories. They go back to 1933, when Babe Ruth's homer gave Connie Mack's American Leaguers a win over John McGraw's National Leaguers in the first All-Star Game. An aura now surrounds this event that was hatched by Chicago *Tribune* sports editor Arch Ward as a gift to his city's centennial fair. The fans created the aura, of course, and most players have been caught up in it. Consider what Roberto Clemente said before the '72 game—his last before his tragic death: "It's bull when players say they don't want to be here. What they say is

For photo captions, see page 65.



Mays Sparks NL

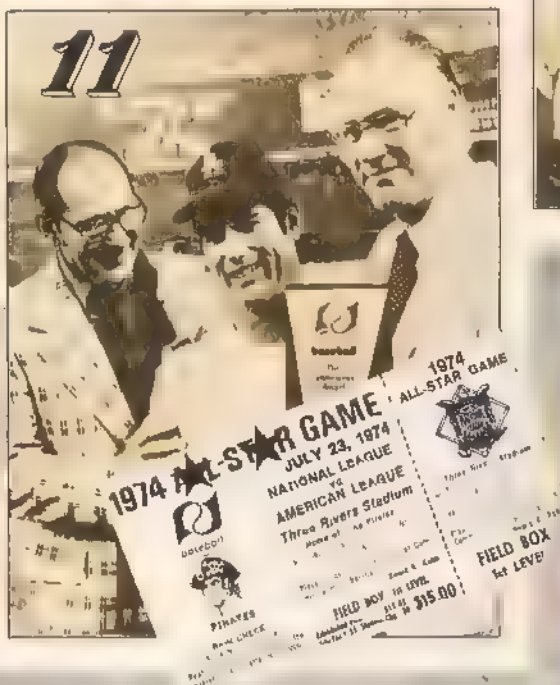
one thing. What they *feel* is another." To more players than might admit it, the game is the ultimate baseball dream, especially to those a cut below the Ruthian level. Jim Bunning made the team for both leagues and won the '57 game as a Detroit Tiger rookie. "I still think of walking out there with Berra and Mantle and Williams," he says. "Ballplayers have heroes, too—and at the All-Star Game, they can be heroes among their heroes."

Many players cherish their memories of the All-Star Game. Stan Musial, who played in 24 All-Star Games and batted .315, best remembers the '55 game. "I came in for Del Ennis, then hit into a double play and grounded out in the ninth with the winning run on. In the 12th, I told Yogi Berra at the plate that I couldn't hold the bat up I was so tired. I just took a blind cut against Frank Sullivan, looked up and saw the ball hit just inside the foul pole for a homer to win it. When I touched home, Yogi was still there. He gave me a dirty look and walked away . . . I don't know, in that game you find strength somewhere."

Don Drysdale, who holds the All-Star record for innings pitched (19), remembers the '62 game in Washington. "I can still see President Kennedy sitting next to the dugout. My wife was in labor when I went out there, so I was doubly nervous. What stands out was me

hitting Rich Rollins—unintentionally. I assure you, I had that reputation, and I thought, 'Oh God, now people—even the President—are gonna think I hit guys even in All-Star Games.' I kept telling everyone, 'It was a *curve-ball* guys, honestly.' " Drysdale's Dodger teammate, Maury Wills, doesn't talk about how he stole a base and scored two runs in that game, including the winner. He talks about carrying the MVP trophy out of the stadium when it was over. "All during the game I kept on thinking of the guard who wouldn't let me in before the game. He said I was too small to be a ballplayer. When I walked past him with the trophy and saw his reaction, man, that was something I'll never forget."

Stu Miller will be remembered as the man who balked because he was blown off the mound by the wind in the '61 game at San Francisco's Candlestick Park. In the All-Star Game, even the weird occurrences are of All Star dimensions. "Sure, that's why I'll always be remembered as they guy who bunted for a home run," says Leo Durocher of the '38 game. "I figured I'd never bunt during the season, not my style, so I'll do it here. And when I did, the great Jimmie Foxx threw it past the great Charlie Gehringer at first because Gehringer was so shocked he forgot to cover first. Then the great Joe



Says

DiMaggio threw it over everyone's head into the dugout and I came all the way around to score. . . . But, hell, I figured it would happen just that way all the time."

We hear a lot about the players who find the All Star Game a drag. We don't hear much about a Jim Palmer, suffering from a bad elbow, flying to Milwaukee for the '75 game, then flying to Baltimore for a cortisone shot—then flying back to Milwaukee to pitch in the game. "I've been called a cynic," Palmer says, "but the All-Star Game excites me no end because I'm out there with the best in the game. Guys like to tell me they don't care. I tell them, 'Sure you do—because if I do, you do, too.'" Dodger pitcher Don Sutton sees the game itself as a natural high: "You don't realize it before the game, but when it starts, it's a bigger rush than a World Series." As Drysdale says: "The greatest spur I ever had was not wanting to look like a damn fool in the All-Star Game in front of all those guys."

But perhaps Willie Mays, the greatest All-Star performer of them all, offers the best perspective: "I never cared about the side issues. I played the game the same every time—because I was playing for the fans, not for me. It's *their* game."

—Mark Ribowsky

Memories Are Made of This

(1) Spiffy dressers Connie Mack (left) and John McGraw—the first All-Star Game managers. The place is Comiskey Park, 1933. The experiment worked. (2) Babe Ruth may have been fat, 38 and on the way out, but he knew a dramatic opening when he saw one—and hit a towering home run (3) This is how Carl Hubbell looked throwing his screwball. Hall of Famer Ruth, Lou Gehrig, Jimmie Foxx, Al Simmons and Joe Cronin hadn't seen anything like it before the 1934 game. Then they all struck out—in succession. (4) In the early days, the American League won the Game often because of people like (left to right) Gehrig, Cronin, Bill Dickey, Joe DiMaggio, Charley Gehringer, Foxx and Hank Greenberg—shown before the 1937 game. (5) From left to right, Cronin, DiMaggio, Bob Feller and Foxx celebrate after the 1939 game at Yankee Stadium—where DiMaggio hit his only All-Star homer. (6) Like Ruth, Ted Williams knew about drama: Detroit, 1941, American League down 5-4, two on and two out, bottom of the ninth. Claude Passeau gets a 2-1 count—and Williams sends the next pitch out of Briggs Stadium. (7) A landmark moment in the history of the All-Star Game—blacks are first allowed to play. At Ebbets Field, 1949: (left to right) Roy Campanella, Larry Doby, Don Newcombe and Jackie Robinson. (8) The aftermath of Stan Musial's 12th inning, game-winning homer in 1955. Yogi was right. Stan doesn't look tired. (9) Frank Robinson records some of his own All-Star memories, getting Willie Mays and Earl Battey in focus before the 1965 game (10) Pete Rose is in a typical pose: jarring Ray Fosse's glove and several parts of his anatomy in scoring the winning run in the 12th inning of the 1970 game. (11) When Joe Garvey (left) used to drive the Brooklyn Dodger team bus, his son Steve would carry the equipment bags. Then Steve grew up and won the 1974 All-Star MVP trophy. Commissioner Bowie Kuhn is pleased that this can happen in baseball

PHOTO CREDITS (1) Courtesy Baseball Hall of Fame, (2) UPI, (3) UPI, (4) Courtesy Baseball Hall of Fame, (5) Wide World, (6) UPI, (7) UPI, (8) Wide World, (9) UPI, (10) UPI, (11) Wide World, All Star ticket courtesy Hal Evans



In Little League, the catcher was the fat kid who could hit. But in the major leagues, he's the man with the most important and least understood job—as our panel of experts explains

By VIN GILLIGAN

ATING



Look, you ask almost anyone and they'll tell you that John Bench [Cincinnati] was the National League's best defensive catcher of this era," said Bob Boone, the Phillies' 1978 Gold Glove-winning catcher. "After all, he won ten Gold Gloves in a row. But ask a *catcher*, and he's likely to tell you that Jerry Grote [Mets] was better. I know I would. The problem is that to judge a catcher, you almost have to be a catcher, because the most important things a catcher does are things the fans, the sportswriters and even most of the players can't even see.

A wide cross-section of major-league catchers and coaches polled by SPORT confirmed Boone's appraisal that the most important things a catcher does are indeed unseen. Most fall into the nebulous category of "handling pitchers," which includes such things as pitch selection, knowledge of batters and detecting and correcting flaws in the pitcher's motion.

"And the unseen things go beyond handling pitchers," Boone said. "It's positioning a fielder just right for the way the batter is being pitched to so that what

would normally be a double in the gap is hit right at someone for a line-drive out. It's catching a foul tip for a strikeout rather than giving a Dave Parker another cut. It's smoothly receiving a borderline pitch for a called strike, rather than jerking the glove which causes the umpire to call it a ball. It's any number of things that no one sees and don't show up in a box score, but that help your team win."

For all its importance, though, catcher is the position no one wants to play. From our earliest neighborhood games, the catcher was the kid who was so bad he couldn't even be trusted in rightfield. In Little League, the catcher was the fat kid who couldn't hit.

"You know why I became a catcher?" said Dodger Hall-of-Famer Roy Campanella. "Because when I tried out for my high school team, the coach said, 'Separate by positions, pitchers there, infielders there, outfielders there and catchers there.' After everyone had shifted around, I noticed no one was in the catcher's area, so I figured if I said I was a catcher, I'd be sure to make the team."

Catcher is understandably the position no one wants. A catcher spends his days

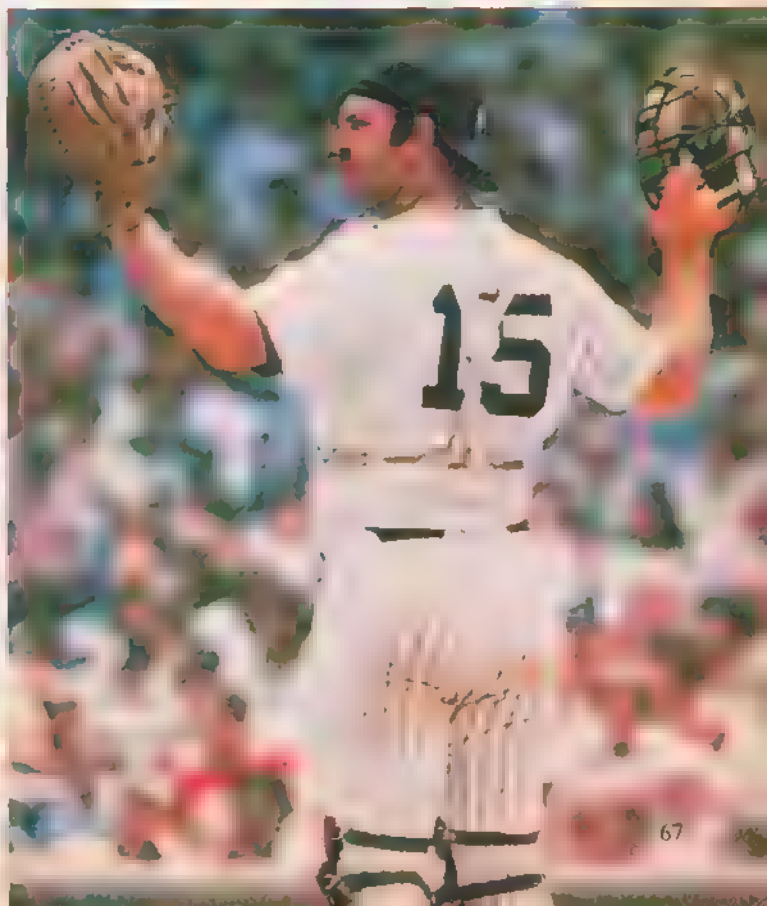
squatting in the dirt with an umpire yelling in his ear, protecting himself from 90-mile-an-hour hardballs being thrown at him from one direction, while from another, a two-pound ash-wood club is swung within inches of his head. His working hours are punctuated by foul tips crashing into his facemask, stinging his unprotected hand and driving into his groin.

Other infielders may accidentally sustain collisions, but only the catcher must block a base with his body just to save one run—digging in for bone-jarring collisions that may jeopardize his career.

Catching is, then, the position where the most important function cannot be seen, the position at which every team must be strong, but at which few people want to play. Catching just may be the most important and least understood po-

The best of baseball's backstops: at top left, the Dodgers' Steve Yeager, and (at bottom, from left to right) the Cardinals' Ted Simmons, the Rangers' Jim Sundberg, the Mariners' Bob Stinson, the Phillies' Bob Boone and the Yankees' Thurman Munson

THE CATCHERS



Catchers

sition in baseball.

For insights into the art of catching and a rating of the current crop, SPORT asked a 17-man panel, ten of them voting members, to evaluate the catchers in seven primary phases. Panelists could award up to ten points per category, with five points denoting average major-league skills and ten signifying the best skills in baseball.

The American League panelists were: Ralph Houk, former Yankee catcher and ex-manager of the Yankees and Tigers, now retired; Jeff Torborg, former Dodgers and Angels catcher, now Indians manager; Bill Frechan, Tigers catcher for 14 years, now Seattle Mariners broadcaster; Charlie Lau, catcher for the Orioles, Braves, Tigers and Athletics, now Yankees batting coach; and an American League umpire whose name is withheld by request.

Rating the National League were: Norm Sherry, former Dodgers and Mets catcher, ex-Angels manager and now an Expos coach; Jerry Grote, a catcher for 14 years, mostly with the Mets, now retired from baseball; Tom Haller, catcher for 11 years, mostly with the Giants and

now a Giants coach; Tim McCarver, 18 years of catching, first with the Cardinals and now as a back-up on the Phillies; and a National League umpire, whose name is withheld by request.

Also contributing to this discussion were Johnny Bench, Reds; Bob Boone, Phillies; Carlton Fisk, Red Sox; Gary Carter, Expos; Jim Sundberg, Rangers; Ted Simmons, Cardinals; and Rube Walker, Mets pitching coach.

Some catchers, such as Lance Parrish of the Tigers and Gary Alexander of the Indians, were excluded from the rating because not all the panelists had seen them play enough to rate them accurately. Also, since the status of Carlton Fisk's throwing arm was unknown when the rating was done, the panelists assessed Fisk as of the 1978 season when his arm was functional.

On that basis, Fisk was rated the top defensive catcher in the American League, followed in order by Sundberg and the Yankees' Thurman Munson (tied for second), the Seattle Mariners' Bob Stinson, Baltimore's Rick Dempsey, Kansas City's Darrell Porter and Minnesota's Butch Wynegar. The Dodgers' Steve Yeager was tops in the N.L., followed by Boone, Bench, Carter, the Mets' John Stearns, Simmons and San Diego's Gene Tenace.

THE MECHANICS OF CATCHING: RECEIVING THE BALL, BLOCKING BALLS, ETC.

RUBE WALKER Some catchers effortlessly gather-in every pitch. That pumps up the pitcher and gives him confidence, especially when he knows his catcher has the reflexes and hands to block any ball in the dirt and to keep balls in front of him.

BOB BOONE—A good catcher increases the pitcher's repertoire. Say there is a runner on third, one out and a 2-2 count. You call for a curveball in the dirt because you just know that batter will chase that pitch for a strikeout. If a pitcher doesn't have complete confidence in you to block that ball in the dirt with the runner on third, he'll either shake you off, or worse, subconsciously hang the curve.

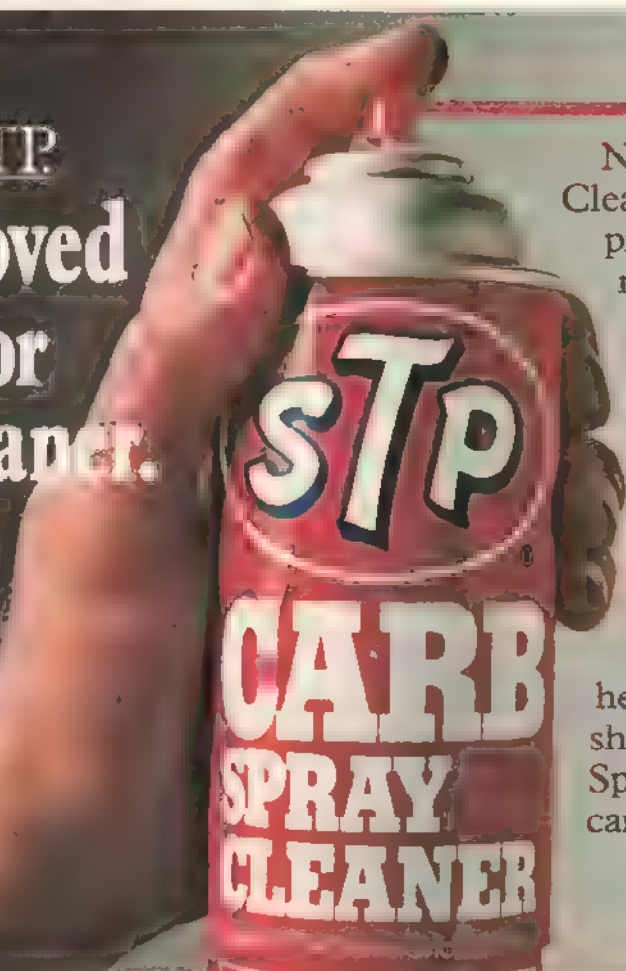
TIM McCARVER—Steve Yeager [Dodgers] is excellent with balls in the dirt and with the mechanics of catching in general. But one of the best is a backup catcher, Mike Sadek of the Giants. He moves beautifully behind the plate.

BOONE—There is a way of moving behind the plate that makes it difficult for opposing teams to know where you want the pitch. Some catchers get into patterns that are easy for the other team to read.

JIM SUNDBERG—Hitters try to peak at the target, so you do things like set up on

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the inside for an outside pitch and switch at the last instant. Other times you set the target where you want the pitch. You just have to mix things up enough so you're not telegraphing anything.

TED SIMMONS—You hear TV announcers say how the pitcher missed the target, but how do they know? A lot of time the target is a spot on the shin guard or your shoulder or some other damn thing. If the glove was the target every time, you'd get creamed.

JERRY GROTE—A good catcher can steal borderline strike calls for his pitcher. I used to get away with murder with umpires. Every catcher had been taught to catch low pitches two-handed with the glove facing up. I started catching low pitches with the glove facing across, like you'd catch a pitch around the waist. Umpires were conditioned to calling strikes on pitches caught like that. So I was getting a whole lot of strike calls on low balls.

BOONE—Yeah, I do some things to steal strikes, but umpires read SPORT too, so . . .

JOHN BENCH—The one thing you don't want to do is try to move a ball back toward the strike zone. That's easy to spot and just gets umpires mad.

GARY CARTER—I know all about that because I used to do it.

SIMMONS The quickest way to get umpires mad is to argue ball and strike calls. It's the single stupidest thing a catcher can do.

CARTER—You've got to be a diplomat with umpires. You can question calls, but only in a friendly way, and only while you're facing the mound. Turn around and they hate it. But on a borderline pitch you can say, "Hey, that's the way his ball is breaking today. We need that call." And chances are, the next time that pitch hits that spot, you'll get the strike.

A.L. UMPIRE—Catchers have two strike zones. Behind the plate everything is a strike. At the plate, everything is a ball.

GROTE—I'll bet not many people know that catching foul tips for strikeouts is an art. For instance, the Mets had guys like Tom Seaver and Jon Matlack—hard throwers with rising fastballs. Any foul tip will be going up because people swing underneath rising fastballs. So, you plan on catching a clean strike in the very bottom of the glove, which leaves five or six inches of the glove to allow for the ball being tipped up.

Also, you move the glove upward as the ball is being pitched so that you have a better chance to react to the tip itself. And you move the glove so that it will be as close as possible to the point where the batter's swing will contact the ball, thereby cutting down on the angle of deflection and greatly increasing the chance of the tip being caught. If you do it all perfectly, the pitcher gets credited with

THE CATCHERS RATE THEMSELVES

GARY CARTER—I'd like to say Bench is the best because he was kind of my hero, but he's lost some on his arm and the pitchers say he doesn't put that much into his catching anymore. Defensively it's between Yeager and Boone, but probably Yeager is better. Simmons isn't the catcher he is a hitter, but he swings a bat so well. I'd have to take him overall, unless I could get Gary Carter.

JIM SUNDBERG—Everyone would like to have a Fisk or a Munson, but they're into their 30s. If I were a GM I'd go with youth and probably take Lance Parrish.

BOB BOONE—Now that Grote is retired I'd go with Yeager defensively. Overall, offense included, I'd go with Bench in his prime, but now it would be Simmons. He's just a super hitter, but with that Cardinal lineup, that stadium and the burden of catching, not many people will ever realize what a good hitter he is. Gary Carter improved tremendously last year and he should be the next John Bench-Carlton Fisk all rounder.

TED SIMMONS—Defensively I still rate Bench high, tied with Yeager. Next I'd take Fisk and then Boone. I haven't seen Sundberg enough, but with all the things Fisk does, Sundberg would have to have an absolute rocket for me to put him ahead of Fisk. With hitting included, I'd take Bench then Fisk then Munson, with Yeager close behind. His defense offsets a lot of offense.

JOHN BENCH—It's between Yeager and Boone. Yeager has a stronger arm and is a little more stylish, more macho behind the plate, so you notice him more. Simmons has improved 100 percent defensively, so if you include hitting, he'd be my man now. But I think Gary Carter is the man of the future.

CARLTON FISK—Sundberg defensively and Munson with hitting included, unless you want the best of both worlds, and then it would be that Fisk guy.

the strikeout and people say how lucky you were that the tip happened to land in your glove.

VOTING RESULTS (AVERAGE SCORE):

AL		NL	
1. Sundberg	9.2	1. Yeager	8.8
2. Fisk	8.7	2. Boone	7.9
3. Munson	8	3. Bench	7.7
4. Stinson	6.5	4. Carter	7.3
5. Wynegar	6	5. Stearns	6.8
6. Dempsey	5.9	6. Simmons	5.2
7. Porter	5.8	7. Tenace	5

THROWING ARM: STRENGTH AND ACCURACY.

BOONE—I thought throwing would be the easiest part of catching because I'd pitched, so I knew I could throw. But it turned out to be the hardest part. Working out the steps and learning to go through the plate, especially with a left-handed batter in the way, was as difficult as perfecting a pitching motion. Consistent accuracy was the hardest thing to develop.

CARTER You have throwing slumps just like hitting slumps. With me it's usually a mechanical flaw that causes the ball to have a tail on it. I lose accuracy and speed, not to mention confidence. I have to think and work my way out of it. I'll go out before a game, sometimes with full equipment on, and just throw 30 or 40 balls to second base.

SIMMONS—Bench has lost a lot on his arm, now I'd rate him with Yeager.

GROTE—Yeager surprised me. I thought he had a great arm, and it is strong, but watching him every day with the Dodgers I saw him throw an awful lot of balls that bounced behind the mound or missed second by ten feet.

CARTER—Simmons is an optical illusion. His release looks so slow and his ball looks so slow, but damned if he doesn't get it down there and throw out runners.

I AU—Sundberg has a gun. It's not fair to rate Munson now. I don't think people realize how much trouble and pain his shoulder has caused him.

RALPH HOUK—I know you'll think I'm saying this because I used to manage the Tigers, but I'm retired now and can say anything I want, so believe me when I tell you that Lance Parrish has the best arm in the American League, Sundberg included.

VOTING RESULTS:

AL		NL	
1. Sundberg	9	1. Yeager	8.6
2. Fisk	7.5	2. Bench	7.8
3. Dempsey	7.1	Carter	7.8
4. Stinson	6.9	4. Boone	7.2
5. Porter	6.8	5. Stearns	6.9
6. Wynegar	5.9	6. Simmons	5.8
7. Munson	4	7. Tenace	4.5

THROWING ARM. QUICKNESS OF RELEASE.

CARTER—I had to get it through my head that it's the catcher's job to get the

Catchers

ball to the base and just have confidence that there will be someone there to catch it. If you throw to the person covering, instead of to the base, your release will be slower, and it disturbs the hand-eye coordination needed for accuracy.

BOONE—I used to watch the runner's progress out of the corner of my eye, get excited and rush my throw. It has to be fluid and quick, but not rushed in panic, or accuracy goes out the window.

JEFF TORBORG—Rick Dempsey has long-arm action which slows his release. Munson has the quickest release I've seen, but Jim Essian [Oakland] is not far behind; Essian has a strong arm, too.

A.L. UMPIRE—Munson has always had a great release, but when his arm prob-

FIELDING THE POSITION: BUNTS, POP-UPS, TAG PLAYS, PICKOFFS.

NORM SHERRY—There aren't many tricks. How good a guy will be just depends on athletic ability and hard work.

Here are some basics to learn, like a foul pop-up behind the plate will drift back from the stands toward homeplate and one in front of the plate will drift toward the mound, but it's pretty straightforward.

GROTE—Low pop-ups that don't have much hang time and fall near the wall or railing used to drop uncaught because you had to slow up to avoid crashing into the wall. I found that you could catch these by sliding into the wall just like it was second base. It softened impact without slowing you down and you don't have to take your eye off the ball.

McCARVER—A lot of guys are pretty

plate, but I think there's an art to not getting hurt, and you don't have to sacrifice aggressiveness.

SIMMONS—Exactly. I think if you play aggressively, you're okay. It's usually when people back off that they start getting hurt. I'll block the plate like a wall any time it can help us win a game.

FISK—I'd have to argue with that. Playing aggressively hasn't kept me that healthy. I won't block the plate anymore, but I think I make more tag plays now. By playing in front of the plate and being more mobile, I'm able to react better to angles of throws. When you block the plate, only two things can happen. You can get creamed and drop the ball or get creamed and hang on to the ball. Neither is a very attractive option

VOTING RESULTS:

AL		NL	
1. Fisk	8.5	1. Yeager	9.2
Sundberg	8.5	2. Bench	9
3. Munson	8	3. Boone	8.3
4. Stinson	6.5	4. Stearns	7
5. Wynegar	5.8	5. Carter	6.8
6. Dempsey	5.6	6. Tenace	5.6
7. Porter	5.4	7. Simmons	5.3

CALLING A GAME: PITCH SELECTION AND KNOWLEDGE OF BATTERS.

TORBORG—With a flamethrower, pitch selection is fairly straightforward. But with a finesse pitcher, who has several different pitches and depends on location, it approaches an art form.

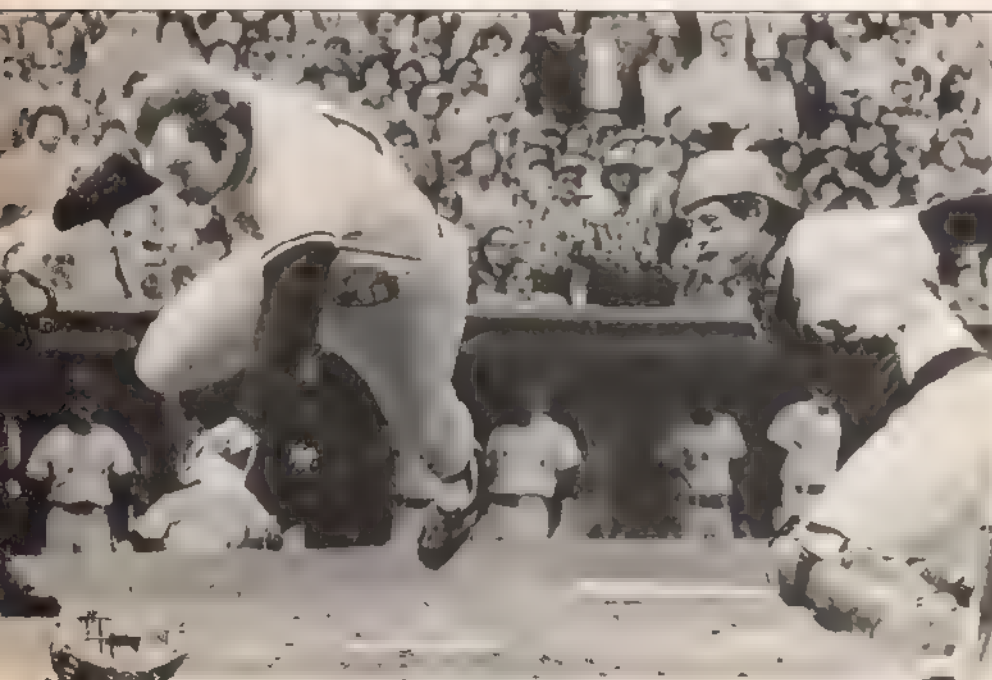
FISK—It can be the most beautiful and creative part of catching. Working with [Luis] Tiant when he was really on was the most fun I've ever had catching. We communicated without talking. A batter would come up and neither of us would know how we were going to pitch him, so we would just start, both of us perfectly in tune with one another. We could play with a batter's tempo, his intensity, his mind. On those good days, it was almost like the batter was our puppet. I decided what strings to pull and Looie pulled them.

BOONE—When you're working pitching patterns on a batter, it's not just a pattern for one at-bat or one game, it's a pattern that extends over a series or even much longer.

WALKER—When a pitcher really believes in his catcher, like I guess [Steve] Carlton does in McCarver, it makes him comfortable, gives him confidence and makes him a better pitcher.

GROTE—I can't understand Carlton's preference for McCarver. Besides being a fine all-round catcher, Boone calls a hell of a game. Best in the league

BOONE—I've pitched a lot, so calling a game came very naturally. As far as Carlton and McCarver go, it just comes under the general heading of "that's life."



After years of jarring homeplate collisions with the likes of archrival Munson, Boston's oft-injured Carlton Fisk decided "I won't block the plate anymore."

lems started, he quickened it still further to compensate. He is in the area of diminishing returns. He gives a lot of extra bases by throwing into centerfield.

GROTE—Throwing out a runner is like a western gunfight. You want to get that shot off as quickly as possible, but if you miss your target, you're in big trouble

good, but Grote was the best I've seen at bunts. He'd pounce out low, scoop and fire. So quick.

N.L. UMPIRE—Bench is the best I've ever seen at picking off runners. He and [Pete] Rose [at third] worked it beautifully.

BENCH—We didn't use a set play, just eye contact; a meeting of minds. It's a fine line because you have to receive the ball naturally and can't move too quickly behind the plate until the last split second or you'll tip the runner. In that split second, the play happens. The infielder's timing is critical, too. You have to surprise two people, the runner and the coach

SIMMONS—Yeager is excellent at snap pickoff throws.

BOONE—A catcher has to be aggressive. You know he takes a beating around the

VOTING RESULTS.

AL		NL	
1. Munson	9.5	1. Bench	8.9
2. Sundberg	8.9	2. Yeager	8.7
3. Fisk	7	3. Carter	7.9
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5. Porter	6.8	5. Stearns	6.9
6. Dempsey	6.6	6. Tenace	5.8
7. Wynegar	6.1	7. Simmons	4.8

CARTER—It just confuses me even more about the Gold Glove Award. If the award has anything to do with the statistics of catching, then I had a better year than Booney. Hell, I only had one passed ball. And if it has to do with the intangibles of catching, then how great can Bob Boone be if Carlton doesn't want to pitch to him?

Anyway, one aspect of the rapport you develop with pitchers can go too far. That's when the pitcher goes along with you to the point where he never shakes you off. In certain situations I signal him to shake me off just to get the batter thinking and hopefully outguessing himself.

GROTE—Pitch selection can become pretty refined. In my first couple of years catching Tom Seaver, the Mets had a great shortstop [Bud Harrelson] and some other guys who weren't that good, and to make things worse, they played every batter the same. They just wouldn't move. So I tried to call—and Tom tried to pitch—so that every possible batter would hit the ball to shortstop. It's something that could only work with someone who spotted the ball as well, and threw as hard, as Seaver, but damned if it didn't work real good for us.

SIMMONS—I think knowledge of batters is the most important part of catching. You should have a complete catalog of

every hitter's strengths and weaknesses. It's much more than knowing that a guy has trouble with high-and-tight fastballs.

You have to know how smart he is, will he make small adjustments from one pitch to the next or one at-bat to the next? You have to know how good his memory is, will he remember what you got him out with a month ago and will he be looking for it in the same situation? You have to know how well he knows the strike zone. Will he be patient or anxious in the clutch? Will he become frustrated if he's having a bad day or will he dig in and be tougher? There's a lot to know about a couple of hundred hitters.

GROTE—Johnny Oates [backup catcher for the Dodgers] knows the hitters as well as anyone. But I'll tell you the strangest thing I did catching. There were a couple of guys I used to give hits to. They were seventh and eighth place hitters, and if they were up in the early innings with two out and no one on base, I'd just have the pitcher lay one in there and give the guy a hit. They were mentally .200 to .250 hitters, and once they had their hit, they were happy and something inside them clicked off and they were useless at bat the rest of the game. But get these same guys up without a hit in the late innings and they were tigers, as likely to hurt you as anyone. They had some competitive

deficiency, and you could just defuse them by giving them their hit.

LAU—That sounds pretty far out, but as a batting coach I know the .250-hitter mentality Grote is talking about.

VOTING RESULTS:

<u>AL</u>		<u>NL</u>	
1. Munson	9	1. Boone	8.4
2. Fisk	8.5	2. Yeager	8.2
3. Stinson	7.6	3. Simmons	7
4. Sundberg	7	4. Carter	5.9
5. Dempsey	5.6	5. Bench	5.8
6. Wynegar	5.1	6. Stearns	5.6
7. Porter	5	7. Tenace	5.3

DETECTING AND CORRECTING FLAWS IN A PITCHER'S MOTION.

McCARVER—Bob Gibson set me straight on this a long time ago. I went out in the middle of a game to have a little chat about his pitching, and he told me, "Keep your goddamn mouth shut. If you want to talk about pitching we'll do it over a beer, but don't be coming out here in the middle of an inning and start telling me how to pitch."

Detecting and correcting pitchers' flaws is way overrated as a function of a catcher. How am I going to tell a pitcher how to pitch when I've never pitched myself?



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Catchers

WALKER—I couldn't disagree more. If a catcher doesn't know enough about pitching to go out and help his pitcher, then he'd better learn. It's part of his job.

GROTE—You should know enough about pitching to act as a kind of assistant pitching coach. I learned to throw a curve, a slider, every pitch except a knuckle-curve. I even roomed with pitchers so I could talk pitching and learn it from their perspective.

BENCH—Detecting and correcting flaws is the coach's job. When he sees something wrong, he'll go talk to the pitcher. If it's something basic, like the pitcher is just aiming the ball, I'll go talk to him, but I don't want to get too complicated and maybe tell him something contrary to what the coach told him. It's the coach's job and I don't want to step on his toes.

SUNDBERG—I agree with Bench—it is the coach's job. But I don't worry about stepping on anybody's toes. I'll tell the pitcher anything I pick up.

WALKER—A good catcher should be involved enough with the staff so that he pretty much knows what the coach is telling the pitchers.

FISK—That's right, but it's really not that difficult to know how to correct things because individual pitchers fall into the same bad habits game after game, sometimes inning after inning. So you have a good idea what's going to go wrong and how to correct it. Sure, the basic mechanics of pitching are the coach's job, but the catcher should detect and correct flaws as soon as they appear in a game and before they snowball into disaster.

SUNDBERG—How can a catcher notice what the pitcher is doing wrong when he's concentrating on catching the ball? You might notice him dropping his arm down or something major, but hell, you don't even see his follow through.

TORBERG—You don't have to focus on a pitcher's motion to see it. You have a picture in your mind of what that motion should be like. And even though you are focusing on catching the ball, what is happening in the background—the motion—is on some level compared to that mental picture. It's like comparing two photographs, you can tell when something is wrong, and sometimes exactly what is wrong. Plus, you can go by the spin on the ball.

GROTE—When you really know your pitcher you can detect specific flaws by how the ball spins. If Seaver palmed the ball on a curve or dropped his wrist on a slider, the ball would spin in a distinct way and I'd know exactly what the problem was.

SUNDBERG—Well, that sounds pretty far out. I can look at the rotation and tell something is wrong, but as to which

OVERALL DEFENSIVE RATING

AL	NL
1. Fisk 8.2	1. Yeager 8.6
2. Sundberg 8.1	2. Boone 8
Munson 8.1	3. Bench 7.3
4. Stinson 7	4. Carter 6.8
5. Dempsey 6	5. Stearns 6.5
6. Porter 5.8	6. Simmons 5.7
7. Wynegar 5.7	7. Tenace 5.4

specific mechanical defect is causing the problem, well... if Grote could do that, it's amazing.

WALKER—There's no question that he could do it because it's a fact.

BOONE—That's one of the reasons a catcher shouldn't leave everything to the coach. The catcher can see things, like spin on the ball, that the coach can't from the dugout. Jim Lonborg and I have worked together long enough so that I can pick up specific problems from the spin. But that rapport only comes with time.

FISK—Usually it does, but for some reason I could do it with [Dennis] Eckersley almost from the beginning. Probably because he's so good at picking up his own problems that it speeded the learning process for me.

WALKER—I have to laugh when I hear catchers say that detecting and correcting problems is exclusively the coach's job. They seem to be forgetting that a coach can't go out and talk to his pitcher but once an inning. The second time he has to lift him.

A catcher who can go out and really help his pitcher is best, but second best would be one who minds his own business and leaves everything to the coach. The worst is the guy who doesn't know what he's talking about but tries to help anyway. He just confuses the pitcher and saps his confidence.

VOTING RESULTS:

AL	NL
1. Munson 8.5	1. Boone 8.3
Fisk 8.5	2. Yeager 7.9
3. Stinson 7.3	3. Tenace 5.8
4. Sundberg 5.9	4. Stearns 5.6
5. Wynegar 5.3	5. Carter 5.4
6. Dempsey 5.2	6. Simmons 5
7. Porter 5.1	7. Bench 3.9

FIELD GENERALSHIP: DIRECTING THE TEAM, FIELDING JUDGMENT.

McCARVER—Munson and Fisk are excellent, aggressive, take-charge catchers, but I think they overdo it. I think they can upset their pitcher's tempo. And directing a team is an outgrowth of personality. Simmons is a quiet, nice guy, so his style of directing his team is quiet and nice, but he does a damn good job.

SIMMONS—Sure, some guys overdo it. You can move people around and communicate with the other guys very subtly—a nod of the head, a little gesture with the glove. I don't want to distract my pitcher by strutting all over, waving my arms like some kind of mad dog traffic cop. Pitching tempo is important and I don't want to upset it. Maybe some catchers make a little show of it so everyone will say, 'Wow, look at that guy take charge.'

FISK—Yeah, you can overcontrol a game, and I suppose I've done it. But it's a fine line because a catcher should affect his pitcher's tempo. The trick is to affect it in a positive way.

SUNDBERG—You have to be a general, even if you have to bust rear ends to do it. If I don't like where someone is playing, then I move him. An experienced fielder may know how the hitters hit but he doesn't necessarily know how that hitter is being pitched.

GROTE—A lot of things the catcher should be doing are very, very basic, but important. Half the time pitchers are so wrapped up in what they are doing, they don't even know where they are. So you can't take their remembering anything for granted. In a bunt situation you should remind them to cover first. Sounds like Little League, right? Well, last year [Don] Sutton blew a game because he didn't cover first on a bunt and Yeager hadn't reminded him.

BOONE—Not to sound corny, but some of the leading you do is by example. In crucial situations, the catcher is cast in the same role as a floor leader in basketball. I think mental or judgmental mistakes by a catcher can deflate the team, and the good catchers just don't make those mistakes. Anyway, I may be thought of as a mild "field general," but the Phillies are an older team. I might be very different on a young club.

BILL FREEHAN—A veteran club sometimes requires a strong, butt-kicking leader. I think the Yankees are an example of that. Munson's role on that club is vital. He's a brilliant leader. Also, Fisk is like the conductor of an orchestra. He seems to know just what is needed and just when it's needed. ■

VOTING RESULTS:

AL	NL
1. Munson 9.5	1. Boone 8.7
2. Fisk 9	2. Yeager 8.5
3. Sundberg 8.2	3. Bench 8.2
4. Stinson 7.3	4. Carter 6.9
5. Dempsey 6.3	5. Stearns 6.9
6. Porter 5.8	6. Simmons 6.6
7. Wynegar 5.5	7. Tenace 5.7

VIN GILLIGAN, himself a former sandlot catcher, last reported for SPORT on race-car driver Danny Ongais.

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THE ELECTRIC PEAR

Cornell's lacrosse coach
Richie Moran has an
.888 winning percentage,
a high-voltage personality
...and an unusual shape



Text by IRA ROSEN • Photographs by DAN BALIOTTI

It is ten minutes to showtime. The Electric Peat, as Cornell lacrosse coach Richie Moran has been dubbed for his wit and rotund shape, prepares for his performance. He looks over the material he wrote the night before and seems satisfied with it. He straightens his green tie, then brushes his hair back with his hand. He is now ready.

While Moran waits in his small Teagle Hall office for recruit Brian Curran, he entertains his visitor with a reading from his office-card catalog. If a Cornell lacrosse player needs a summer job or tutoring help, Moran goes to the file. When Moran wants a high school player scouted, he leafs through the card catalog till he finds an alumnus in the area who would be willing to scout the prospect. If Moran needs a hotel reservation, he will call a former player who was in the hotel administration school at Cornell. Moran keeps in touch with all of them—from the 1972 third-string midfielder to the All-America from the 1976 team.

"You ask me where any of my former players are and I'll tell you," says Moran. He begins to reel off lists of names, places and professions. When he is satisfied that the visitor believes him, Moran gives a big Irish smile, his face flushing excitedly. "Contacts. That's where it's at, baby. It is who you know that counts."

The show begins ten minutes later when Brian Curran walks in. He is one of the most highly-sought lacrosse and football players in the East. Curran possesses three rare attributes for a high school student—an excellent throwing arm, a big, strong body, and good grades—which make him a prize catch for any college. Curran has already received offers of full scholarships from several universities. Since no athletic scholarships are offered in the Ivy League, Moran's only monetary training chip is the possibility that Curran could receive financial aid and a job during school.



Lacrosse at its best combines the agility and quickness of NBA basketball with the body contact of Stanley Cup hockey. In the top left photo, Cornell attackman Joe Taylor applies a flying check to a Johns Hopkins laxman. Below left, Jimmy DeNicola (21) checks Hopkins' goalie Mike Federico, who attempts to pass off to a defenseman

In the center-top photo, Johns Hopkins' Dave Huntley (18) moves the ball past Cornell's Bob Barron (35). In the center photo below, Cornell midfielder Reiley McDonald (33) collides with a Hopkins player as he tries to get the ball



“Richie goes out of his way to be friendly with any guy,” says a former Cornell star. “Someone else who was a national-champion lacrosse coach two years in a row would say, ‘Kiss my feet, turkey.’ But he humbles himself to everyone. He keeps his success in the right perspective”



John Griffin (above) demonstrates the use of the goalie's larger stick. Right, coach Richie Moran in his good luck sweatshirt.

However, Curran had spent the weekend at Cornell and thoroughly enjoyed himself. Moran had very carefully planned Curran's itinerary to include a visit to the school's museum, talks with players and students, and nightly parties. This is Moran's last talk with Curran before he returns home.

After hearing a short description of Cornell's various colleges, which offer degrees in everything from agriculture to labor relations, Curran seems impressed. Moran leans forward in his chair. "I am not going to hound you like the other coaches. Let me know what you decide. The choice is yours. But don't just go with the last guy who calls you."

Then as Curran gets up to leave, Moran points to him and says, "You got blue eyes, right?"

"Yeah."

"That's just great. They'll go well with our red, home-game uniforms."

Curran, a good-looking kid with an Irish peasant's face, looks puzzled for a second. Then he breaks into a huge grin. Moran throws his arm over Curran's shoulder and the two Irishmen laugh. "I will see you, coach," Curran says as he walks out the door. Moran smiles delightedly. The joke he had written the night before worked perfectly.

"You got to give them something to remember you by," Moran says after Curran leaves. "Curran will think, 'Gee, how did he know I had blue eyes?' I was using a little psychology," Moran says with a knowing wink.

"What would you have said if his eyes were brown?"

Moran, the consummate actor, smiles. "I would have said they'll go well with



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Lacrosse

our white, away game uniforms."

It is hard to imagine that at one time Moran hated recruiting. As a lacrosse coach at several Nassau County (N.Y.) high schools, he won 96 of 104 games and was able to produce championship teams without leaving the school grounds to find players. He dislikes the notion of buying and selling players, a dislike he had to overcome when, in May, 1968, he decided to accept Cornell University's offer to coach their lacrosse team. Moran, whose career has included a stint in the Marines, trash collecting and road-crew ditch digging, was willing to sacrifice the safety of high school tenure for the possible fame—and insecurity—of college coaching's hire/fire policies.

Since accepting the Cornell position, Moran has developed into the winningest college lacrosse coach in the sport's history. Prior to the 1979 season, his overall Cornell record was 119-15, a winning percentage of .888. Of the Big Red's last 60 games, it has won 57—35 straight in the Ivies—not losing in regular-season play for six years. In 1976 Cornell won the NCAA championship and was 16-0, the first perfect record by an NCAA lacrosse champ. It duplicated that in 1977 with another undefeated NCAA championship season. Last year Cornell again won all its regular-season games, but lost in the finals to archrival Johns Hopkins.

Aside from the sport's aficionados, lacrosse is not considered a major sport. The Indians invented the game to develop strength and quickness. As many as a thousand warriors in full war paint played in a game. But the white man modernized

the sport, eventually reducing the number of players on the field to 20—ten on a side—while keeping the essential idea of trying to throw a ball into the opponent's goal with a curved, netted stick. "Basketball and lacrosse are very similar," Richie Moran has said. "I used to coach basketball and it was a great help to my offensive theories in lacrosse. We used the circulation offense, but instead of the guards executing it, we have midfielders." Moran described a typical play shared by lacrosse and basketball: "They set a high post . . . man comes around in front of the pick . . . inside roll . . . quick pass . . . and bingo, he is wide open. We ran that play 500 times for Mike French in 1976."

With no professional league, the stellar performers are the college players. Prior to Moran's arrival, southern schools like the University of Maryland, Johns Hopkins, Navy and Virginia took turns being No. 1. The southern coaches felt that their teams were superior to the Ivies. The reputation of the North began to turn when Cornell defeated Navy in 1974, and it changed permanently when Cornell and Maryland tangled in the 1976 NCAA championship game. After that game, Moran received the supreme recognition from the southern coaches: He won the Coach of the Year award.

Many of Cornell's opposing coaches have tried to figure out why Moran is so successful. Each year through his excellent recruiting he gets some talented players, but usually most of the best lacrossemen (called laxmen by those in the sport) end up taking the scholarships and going south. The secret to Moran's success, most of the players say, is the magic he weaves among them.

Moran eats, showers, dresses and socializes with the players. Freshmen can expect at least one fake phone call while they are in the shower. When they return, Moran will have taken their place. He has sent players to "get a bucket of steam to 'de-ice' the sticks" or pick up some nonexistent "Finnyocoteen powder." He is the team's biggest joker.

"He's a lot of fun to be around," says former midfielder Bob Hendrickson. "He is always goofing and dancing with the trainer, pulling pranks. But he is everyone's best friend. No jinx intended, of course."

The jinx factor is an important consideration on Moran's teams. Probably the wildest Indian witch doctor didn't go through as many rituals as Moran does before a game. "If something goes well he tries to do it again and make a bit out of it," says former midfielder John Sierra. "Before one game, a lot of the guys were drinking iced tea—usually we only take water or orange juice—and we played really well. The weekend of the 1977 championship game, everyone had a big glass of iced tea."

Other players utter secret words to trainer Rick LaFrance before they are taped. Moran sits in the same spot in the lockerroom and has a can of Coke that he drinks exactly 20 minutes before a game. He also wears the same Cornell sweat-shirt he has had for ten years.

Moran attributes his superstitiousness and his easy camaraderie with players to his Irish nature, but at least one opposing coach feels that Moran's "Irishness" violates an important, unwritten rule: For discipline's sake, coaches should not get close to players. "He is a fast-talking Irishman with no class," says Henry Ciccarone, Johns Hopkins' lacrosse coach. "I don't respect him because he should have more control over his players."

The team's activities do not reflect Ciccarone's viewpoint. Cornell players drive through February snowstorms to make 8 a.m. practices, and if a player misses a practice without good reason, he will often have to make it up with extensive roadwork and menial chores. If he refuses, Moran throws him off the team. Moran's discipline was enough to get him picked by the U.S. Lacrosse Association to be coach of the United States team at the World Lacrosse Championships a year ago.

Ciccarone, the disciplinarian, and Moran will always be rivals, both on and off the field. "Tell Ciccarone that if he wants a job at Cornell, he can fill out an application," Moran says in his typically sarcastic style. "You just ask the players if I have their respect."

Billy Marino was sitting in Simeone's, a bar in downtown Ithaca, N.Y., sipping a gin-and-tonic. When he graduated from Cornell in 1976, he was a first-team All-America. Now this dark-haired, handsome Italian is in the Cornell Graduate Business School, but he has remained close to the lacrosse scene. Moran considers him the one player who best understands the coach.

"The key transition in Moran's coaching career came when I was a freshman, in 1972," Marino remembers. "His coaching was similar to his style in high school—where he had an unbelievable record. He was a disciplinarian then, stressing a 'Look like a team, play like a team' philosophy."

Marino takes a long sip of his drink. "I was a hot-shot All-America in high school. Pretty cocky. When I came here, Moran wanted to put me down. I let him think he was doing it but I kept my confidence all along. There were some players he destroyed, though."

"I saw Richie change, and I was the catalyst in that change. I was bucking his system because I wanted to show him that his lack of acceptance of his players' individuality was the only dimension that his coaching was lacking. He is now able to accept his players for whatever they are

off the field. He realizes that people have their lifestyle and he has his."

"And the secret to Moran's coaching success is that he has a tremendous drive that never quits. When you do something routine like talking to recruits, you do it 200 times a season—talk the same stuff, give them the same story. And Richie: Richie keeps doing it. Something drives him, and that is the key to his endless energy."

"Richie goes out of his way to be friendly with any guy. Someone else who was a national-championship lacrosse coach two years in a row would say, 'Kiss my feet, turkey.' But he humbles himself to everyone. He keeps his success in the right perspective. As far as all his backslapping goes. . . ." Marino thought for a moment. "How much is bullshit and how much is real, I don't know."

At 8:30 a.m. one wintery Saturday the lockerroom is filled with lacrosse players. The team stereo is blaring "Tin Man" by America. Just then Moran walks in.

"Hey, hey, how you doing?" he says as he walks down the line of players, shaking hands, giving pats on the back, winks of the eye, and playful elbow nudges. The entrance of most coaches into the lockerroom causes conversations to cease. Moran's presence makes everyone start laughing and joking.

"Come on, let's go," Moran screams out. "Whooooooeeee," he shouts, "you better get rolling, baby. Come on out of here. You are really going to get punished."

The players start pulling on their sweats a little faster, but they are laughing. The song "Night Fever" is playing and the room erupts in spontaneous, loud clapping when Moran tries to disco. "If this is the youth of America, how can the Russians ever attack us?" he asks.

Once the team is inside Barton Hall—where practice is being held because of the February snow outside—Moran begins instructing. The squad consists mostly of sophomores and juniors, and Moran begins with the game's fundamentals—stick-checking, breaking a zone press with clearing passes, simple give-and-goes. "Hey, you know what moving without the ball is," Moran yells at one player. "Do it."

When the player does what he's told, Moran says nothing. He looks over to a spectator standing on the sidelines and says, "Richie Moran's teams will never be pushovers. Everyone says that because of all the seniors who graduated last year, we will be pushovers in 1979. I love to hear that talk. Because I love the challenge and to watch their faces when we win."

IRA ROSEN, a former SPORT staffer, is working on a book about the Three Mile Island nuclear accident.

NEXT MONTH IN SPORT

Our August issue will lead off with an inside look at **Rod Carew's** all-out drive to, at long last, make the World



Rod Carew

Series....Our other baseball features will include a profile of the Indians serene slugger **Andre Thornton**...a probing analysis of **what makes a great pitching coach**, and why there are so few of them...and the SPORT Interview with baseball's most outspoken color man, colorful **Jimmy Piersall**. In tennis we examine **Pam Shriver's** game as she primes for the upcoming U.S. Open...in motorsports we look at the dusty world of dirt-track **stock car racing**. And we will conclude our enlightening and entertaining series, **A Fan's Guide to Soccer**...plus much more in the August SPORT

SPORT QUIZ

Answers from page 54

Ans 1 b (Game 5, 1937) 2 a (Game 3 1935) 3—a (Game 2, 1934) 4—Montreal 5—b 6—a-4, b-3, c-1, d-2 7—Grote set a record for most consecutive putouts by a catcher as Seaver set a record for the most consecutive strikeouts (10) against the San Diego Padres 8—b 9—b 10—When a Giant, Harvey Kuenn grounded out to the mound for the final out on May 11, 1963 when Sandy Koufax pitched his second no-hitter. With the Cubs on Sept. 9, 1965, Kuenn struck out to give Koufax his fourth no-hitter and only perfect game. 11—c, set by Don Money of the Brewers in '74 (1989) 12—b 13—a (70 33 in 1945 to Stabler's 66 67 in 1976) 14—b (1 983 1 182 for 59 61). 15—c (1961 '62, '68, '69) 16—b 17—a (in 1976). 18—Rick Barry, Calvin Murphy, Mike Newlin, Mike Dunleavy 19—b 20—Al Lopez, who played 1 861 games in the N.L. for Brooklyn, Boston and Pittsburgh and 57 in A.L. for Cleveland

PHOTO CREDITS

Dorothy Alfa—6, 18-19 Julian Baum—80 Courtesy Columbia Studios—41 Melchior DiGiannino—54 (bottom left) Kevin Fitz Gerald—54 (top left and right) Focus On Sports—66 (top left) Peter Mecca—44 Ron Modra—22 Tony Nasta—23 (left) Bob Peterson—66-67 Rich Pilling—2 (middle bottom), 11, 67 (bottom right), 81 (inset), 88 Nancy Platzer—45 Mitchell Reibel—23 (right), 67 (bottom middle) Carl Skalak Jr./Opticom—2 (top) 9 (4), 66 (bottom left and middle) Steve Sutton/Duomo—42 Al Szabo—56 (4), 57 UPI—6, 53, 54 (bottom right), 70, 79 Susan Weinik—46 Wide World—40, 92 Howard Zryb—81 (bottom).

A Fan's Guide to Soccer

Part II

In the world's most fluid game, defenders must not only protect their own goal, they must have the offensive skills to detonate and finish an attack

By PAUL GARDNER and DAVID HIRSHEY

With ten minutes left in Soccer Bowl '77, the Seattle Sounders are swarming around the Cosmos' goal, trying desperately to equalize the score. Shep Messing, the Cosmos' goalkeeper, is diving, leaping and punching balls back into startled faces as he waits for the blitzkrieg to abate. It is not until he sees Cosmos winger Steve Hunt settle the ball

just outside the penalty area that Messing allows himself a small grunt of satisfaction. But instead of wheeling around and turning upfield with the ball, Hunt does an astonishing thing. He heads back toward Messing, back toward his own goal. He dribbles past one Sounder, now two, now three, until he is standing six yards to the left of the Cosmos' goal.

"Kick it out, kick it out, kick the ball out!" Messing screams. It is too late. Seattle's Steve Buttle steals the ball and hammers it low and hard toward the Cosmos' goal. Messing dives and just manages to deflect it around the post. "Sorry," Hunt says to Messing, "I forgot where I was for a second."

Although his play could have cost the Cosmos the championship they went on to win, Hunt's intentions were wholly admirable. He, a goal-scoring forward, had dropped back to assist the defenders.

It was a move that tells a lot about the fluidity of modern soccer and the versatility required of its players. In today's game defenders are expected to do their share of attacking, while forwards must help the defense.

So, be warned. This article, ostensibly about defenders, also has a good deal to say about attacking soccer.

GOALKEEPERS

There is some question as to whether goalkeepers are really soccer players at all. Certainly, they do not dress like soccer players. Not only do goalkeepers wear a different color uniform from the rest of the team, they have been known to ply their trade in baby-blue and burnt orange jerseys that look sensational in discos but bizarre on a soccer field. Of course, given the nature of his craft, a goalkeeper must be a little weird. This is a man who spends his most productive moments diving face-first into someone else's foot. A man who has little use for any of the skills—heading, shooting, trapping, passing, dribbling—that form the heart of soccer.

"It's a crazy position," says Bob Rigby of the Los Angeles Aztecs. "We're really the only individuals out there in the sense

that we can't cop out and say somebody else blew it. There's no place to hide, everybody is always watching."

What they watch mostly are a goalkeeper's hands. Are they durable? Can they catch or deflect or punch away shots that come hurtling in with the force of an 80-mph rocket? But even the quickest, most durable hands are going to get bent out of shape—by the ball, by opponents' feet or simply by crashing into the ground.

Asked about the injuries he'd suffered during his 17-year pro career, Gordon Banks, the former English national team keeper, said: "Let's see. I've broken both thumbs and both wrists and some fingers, too. I've got a metal pin in my right arm. I've been bashed about a bit, you know."

Courage must be there, too—the courage to fling yourself into a tangle of boots to block a shot, the courage to stretch high to grab a cross while opposing forwards barrel into your unprotected body. "A goalkeeper is virtually defenseless when he's up in the air," says Arnie Mausser of the Ft. Lauderdale Strikers. "You have forwards yanking your arm from behind, hitting you with an elbow in the stomach, pulling your shorts."

Not that the goalkeeper is a helpless punching bag. He has his means of commanding respect—an elbow here, a raised knee there.

"There is an unwritten code of honor among goalies, especially among the Americans in the league like Mausser, [Alan] Mayer, Rigby and myself that if one of us gets cheap-shotted, another will make sure to pay the guy back," says Shep Messing, now with the Rochester Lancers. "A couple of years ago, Paul Cannell of Washington submarined Rigby and put him out for the season with a broken collarbone. So the next time we played Washington, I waited for Cannell to come near me after I made a save and I gave him my best elbow to the solar plexus. He doubled over and I could hear the air go out of him like a punctured tire. I said to him, 'That's for Rigs.'"

Goalkeepers tend to be the largest men on a soccer team, but mere height is not automatically an advantage. Clearly it



Vancouver's Phil Parkes, the top goalkeeper in the NASL, throws the ball to a teammate to organize an attack.

helps in dealing with shots up near the eight-foot-high crossbar, but it doesn't help at all when the ball is near the ground. "Ideally, a goalkeeper should be about six-feet tall," says Vancouver's Phil Parkes, who is 6-feet-3 and rated by SPORT's expert panel as the top all-round goalkeeper in the league. "You need the height coming out for cross balls. Being tall might be a bit of a problem in getting down to the low ones, but then you've got to work at it, sharpen your reaction time."

Getting to the ball, then, is more a matter of anticipation and split-second reaction than size. Dallas Tornado goalkeeper Alex Stepney (6-1) thinks these are things "you either have or you don't. You can't learn them. You don't say I'm gonna move here and do this or that, you just can't say I'm gonna save this shot, because sometimes you don't even believe you've saved the ball. There's always a bit of luck, too, isn't there? Sometimes you do it all right, anticipate the guy's shot, make your move . . . and he mis-kicks. You go one way, the ball squirts the other."

Sudden changes in direction are part of the goalkeeper's lot—even when both feet are planted firmly in midair. . . .

It is late in the first half of a preseason exhibition between the San Diego Sockers and the Mexican national team. Mexico's most dangerous forward, Hugo Sanchez, is awarded a free kick from 22 yards out. Alan Mayer, the San Diego goalkeeper, crouches in his cage expecting a shot curling away to his right, but Sanchez drills the ball low and hard, about a foot off the ground to the left.

Mayer launches himself to his left across the goalmouth, his body parallel to the ground, his arms outstretched. He is flying through the air when suddenly the ball hits a divot in front of the goal and shoots up two feet higher than Mayer had anticipated. Though fully extended on his dive, he somehow twists his upper torso backwards and brings his hands up as high as they will go to snare the ball.

"It's the save I'm proudest of," said Mayer, who is rated by the SPORT panel as the best of the American goalies, "because I was able to react twice in one second."

Whenever possible the goalkeeper catches the ball and—if he's in a crowd—clutches it hard to his chest. At-

lanta's Tad Delorm received a sharp reminder of why that is so advisable in an early-season game against the Cosmos. Having caught the ball in a comparatively easy save, he kept it for a moment at arm's length . . . and then dropped it. Almost before it hit the ground, the Cosmos' marauding striker, Giorgio Chinaglia, stuck out a foot and the ball rolled into the unguarded net.

If the ball can't be caught—because the goalkeeper is at full stretch or because of the sheer power of the shot or because of a jostling crowd of players who might knock it loose—then the goalkeeper has two other choices. He can deflect the shot wide of the goal—ideally, so that it goes over the goal line and out of play—but always away from converging forwards. Or he can punch the ball away, holding both fists together and punching for height and distance.

Punching the ball is a frequently used technique in modern soccer where catching is made risky by the ability of players to spin and curve the ball and by crowded penalty areas.

A majority of the players in the penalty area will be the keeper's own defenders, but they too can cause problems by getting in the keeper's way, by blocking his sight of the ball and—the cruelest blow of all—by deflecting a shot out of the keeper's reach. This defensive crowding



At bottom, Cosmos sweeper Carlos Alberto clears the ball with an accurate, intelligent pass. At left, the Strikers' Arnie Mausser, one of the league's top American-born keepers, leaps to snare a shot.



Soccer

has increased the importance of the goalkeeper's role as an organizer. From his position as the deepest defender, he has an overall view of the opponent's attacks. Which is why a goalkeeper needs a commanding voice to warn teammates of dangers and instruct them on positional play.

The goalkeeper should dominate the penalty area—the 18-yard-deep, 44-yard-wide rectangle around the goal by his physical presence, his voice and his personality. "You've got to control the penalty area," says Dallas' Stepney. "And you've got to be cool. If the goalkeeper panics, the rest of the team panics."

"I talk to everyone and get the defenders in position," says Parkes. "I'm their eyes, really, and they've got to listen to me. If someone doesn't do what I shout, then I have a go at him."

Goalkeeping is a solo art that lends itself to dramatic flourishes and showmanship. But British goalkeepers—and they have traditionally been among the world's best—frown on all this. They try to make it look easy. "They say I'm casual—you know. I'll let a ball go by near the post without doing anything," says Parkes, an Englishman. "I know it's going wide, but I'm giving everyone else heart attacks. I'm relaxed because it's easier to play that way. If you can make it look easy, that just makes your opponents sick. If he thinks he's hit a great shot, and you just casually pick it off, he's bound to think, 'What do I have to do to beat this guy?'"

As far as the British are concerned, spectacular goalkeepers are suspect—and usually foreign. "The problem with American keepers like Rigby and Messing," says one English NASL coach, "is that they are more concerned with making the acrobatic, crowd-pleasing save than in learning how to handle a simple cross."

What this criticism ignores is that dif-

ferent styles of soccer breed different types of goalkeepers. Of course, British keepers like Parkes, Stepney, New England's Kevin Keelan and Portland's Mick Poole know how to come off their line and snare high crosses—because the high cross is such a dominant part of British soccer. But it is not used as much by the South Americans. They pose other problems for a keeper. "The South Americans scare me the most," says Arnie Mausser. "They're so good in tight spaces that they can play a give-and-go from five or six yards out. That's very difficult for a goal keeper to read. I'd rather take my chances with a European who'll bomb one from 30 yards."

Mausser's point highlights one of the goalkeeper's ever-present dilemmas: whether to stay near his goal line or to advance toward the ball. By coming out of the goal, the keeper reduces the area that a forward can shoot for, and he may pressure an opponent into hurrying his shot. But the keeper also risks having the opponent chip the ball over his head or dribble it around him.

In one situation, though, there is no argument: When a forward has broken clean through with the ball under control, the goalkeeper *must* come off his line. It is the sort of situation that the NASL has tried to recreate with the shootout to settle tied games, where the shooter starts with the ball 35 yards away. All NASL goalkeepers employ the tactic of rushing straight at the opponent as he advances. More often than not, the kicker panics and fluffs his shot. Through May 6, 13 NASL games this year had gone to the shootout, resulting in 138 shots on goal. Of these, only 50 were converted.

A tougher situation for the goalkeeper is the conventional penalty kick, where the rules insist that he must stay rooted to his line until the opponent, 12 yards away, has kicked the ball. The goalkeeper has less than half a second to react before the ball reaches him. Here there is nothing to do but guess—either from previous knowledge of the shooter, or perhaps from his run up to the ball—which way

the ball is going to go, and dive as the ball is struck. A correct guess and the keeper can be a hero. A wrong guess and, well, no one really expects keepers to save penalty kicks anyway.

Although the goalkeeper spends most of a game within a few yards of his goalposts, there are occasions when he will be required to roam a good deal farther, particularly when his team is pushing everyone forward—including defenders—looking for a crucial goal. When this happens, the keeper may have to function almost as a sweeper, fielding balls as near the edge of the penalty area as he can, or running outside it, where even he is not allowed to use his hands, to cut off a pass and play the ball with his feet or his head to a teammate.

Despite the old soccer axiom that a good goalkeeper is worth a goal a game to his team, it is difficult to think of him as an attacking player. Yet whenever the goalkeeper gains possession of the ball, his team is suddenly on the attack, and he is the detonator. He has three options: to toss or roll the ball to a nearby fullback and let him begin organizing an attack; to look for an unmarked teammate farther downfield and reach him with a long throw; or simply to punt the ball as far down the field as he can, hoping that his forwards can gain possession deep in enemy territory.

Far more often than not, when the keeper punts the ball downfield, it is the opponents who take possession, and the ball comes straight back. As a means of clearing the ball, the high punt is not very effective. Yet every so often, something does happen. In 1974, playing a reserve match in England, Mayer realized a goalkeeper's ultimate fantasy. After making a save, he took the ball out to the edge of the penalty area and boomed a high, arcing punt downfield. The ball traveled 85 yards in the air and landed just inside the opposing penalty area. Because of a steady drizzle, the ground was wet and slick, and instead of taking a high bounce as the opposing goalkeeper had anticipated, the ball squirted underneath him and rolled slowly across the goal line. Goal, Mayer. "I'm not sure who was more stunned, me or him," Mayer said.

The goalkeeper's most effective method of distributing the ball should be some sort of thrown pass to a teammate. "One advantage American goalkeepers have is that we have more throwing ability than most Europeans," says Mausser. "We've grown up playing baseball, football and basketball, all games in which you have to have a good arm."

It is as goalkeepers that American players are making the biggest impression among the mainly foreign pros of the NASL. But the ratings by SPORT's panel of experts (at left) indicate that it is the Americans' courage and startlingly quick reflexes rather than their mastery of

SPORT'S Panel of NASL Experts

Pelé, the greatest player of all time, who retired in 1977 after two and a half seasons with the Cosmos

Giorgio Chinaglia, Cosmos striker who set an NASL record in 1978 with 34 goals

Clive Toye, president of the Chicago Sting and former president of the Cosmos from 1971 to 1977.

Hubert Vogelsinger, coach of the San Diego Sockers who has been in the league since 1974 and won back to back divisional championships with the now-defunct Boston Minutemen.

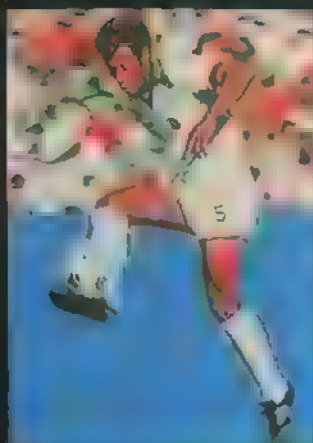
Al Miller, Dallas Tornado coach who is one of only three American-born coaches in the NASL. In his first season, 1973, he took an expansion team, the Philadelphia Atoms, to a league championship.

Ron Newman, coach of the Ft. Lauderdale Strikers and the only NASL coach to win 100 games since joining the league in 1969.

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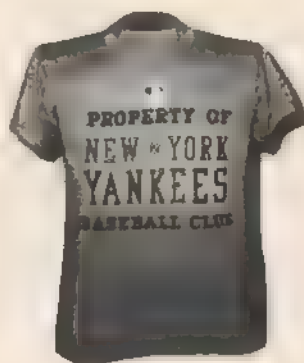
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DEFENDERS

The axiom in modern soccer is: You play with four fullbacks. All pro teams—however they may shuffle around their midfielders and attackers—start with a base of four defenders. Within this quartet, however, there is room for considerable variation in roles and styles of play. Most soccer defenses use a combined man-to-man and zone system. One, or perhaps two, of the opposing team's most dangerous players will be closely marked man-to-man; others may be marked man-to-man only when they enter certain areas, where they will be picked up by the defender patrolling that zone.

The reason for this goes back to the fluid nature of soccer. Any rigid defensive system is bound, sooner rather than later, to collapse against inventive attackers. Defenders must be free to use their soccer intelligence, to match their moves to the demands of a constantly changing offensive pattern. Says Ron Greenwood, coach of the English national team: "Like everything else in soccer, man-to-man marking has to be done intelligently.

Players have to know, instinctively, when to leave their man and go for the ball."

The four-man fullback line affords equal defensive strength across the width of the field. Wherever an attack may come, the idea is for the nearest defender to pressure the opponent while one or more of the remaining fullbacks drops deeper into a "covering" position from where he can move quickly to challenge a forward who gets past the first defender.

In the middle of the defensive line are the two centerbacks. They will play according to one of two systems. In the British system, the two players share the duties, one taking the right-hand side of the field, the other the left. Neither is assigned a man to mark, but each will close up on an attacker who comes into his zone, with the other providing cover. This is the system used by the Ft. Lauderdale Strikers; in an early-season game at Giants Stadium, Cosmos striker Giorgio Chinaglia found himself being shadowed by Ken Fogarty at one moment or Tony Whelan at another.

At the other end of the field, the Cosmos were using the system that has gained almost universal acceptance outside the British Isles: One centerback plays as a stopper, the other as a sweeper. The stopper, as the name connotes, is the ultimate in defensive players. His job is to mark tightly the opposing team's most

dangerous forward. Within, say, 35 yards of the goal, the stopper will try to keep within a yard or two of his man.

Just *how* tight the stopper will get and which tactics he will adopt depends on the matchup. "When I'm marking a player," says Cosmos captain Werner Roth, "I'll always be within an arm's length of him. Knowing you're that close, that you can always get your fingers on him, has to weigh psychologically on a forward. If a player is quick, I have to avoid at all costs the ball played over my head. Take Steve David [the 1975 and 1977 NASL scoring champion, now with the California Surf]—speed-wise, I'm completely overmatched, so I don't dare get too close to him. I must hang back a yard or so."

In the war between stopper and striker, physical contact—legal or illegal—is one of the defender's most valued aids, one that is used right from the start to "establish authority" (read "intimidate"). If there is one position where bulk helps, it is the stopper. Next to the goalkeeper, he is usually the biggest man on the field. "One of my main things is to get an early advantage," says Tampa Bay's Mike Connell. "It might be a good, hard tackle, or it might be an elbow when he doesn't expect it."

"I'll hit him early in the game—not a dirty tackle, but a hard one," Roth says. "If I can get him worrying about what I'm

RATING THE GOALKEEPERS

	DOMINATING GOAL MOUTH	ON THE GOAL LINE	POSITIONING	ANTICIPATION	GROUND BALLS	HIGH BALLS	REFLEXES & REACTION	DISTRIBUTION	SAFE HANDS	CONSISTENCY	COURAGE	LEAPING & DIVING	COMFOUR	PUNCHING & DEFLECTING	DIRECTING THE DEFENSE	CONCENTRATION	TOTALS
Phil Parkes (Vancouver)	4	3	4	4	3	5	4	5	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	64
Kevin Keelan (New England)	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	62
Alan Mayer (San Diego)	3	5	3	4	4	3	5	3	3	5	4	3	3	2	3	3	56
Mick Poole (Portland)	3	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	3	3	3	3	3	54
Bill Irwin (Washington)	4	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	3	3	53
Alex Stepney (Dallas)	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	53
Colin Boulton (Tulsa)	3	3	3	3	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	52
Paul Hammond (Houston)	3	4	3	3	3	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	52
Shap Messing (Rochester)	3	4	2	3	4	2	5	3	3	5	4	3	3	3	2	3	52
Tony Chursky (California)	3	4	3	3	4	3	4	3	3	4	3	2	3	3	3	3	51
Mika Ivanow (Seattle)	4	2	3	3	2	4	3	4	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	51
Arnie Mausser (Ft. Lauderdale)	3	3	3	3	2	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	47
Bob Rigby (Los Angeles)	3	3	3	3	3	2	4	4	2	2	4	5	1	3	3	2	47
Erol Yasin (Cosmos)	2	4	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	2	3	3	46

KEY: 1 - Poor, 2 - Average, 3 - Good, 4 - Very Good, 5 - Outstanding

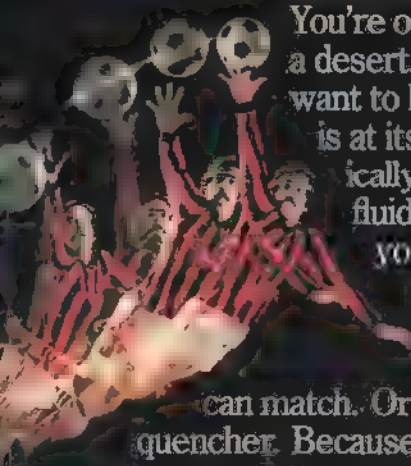




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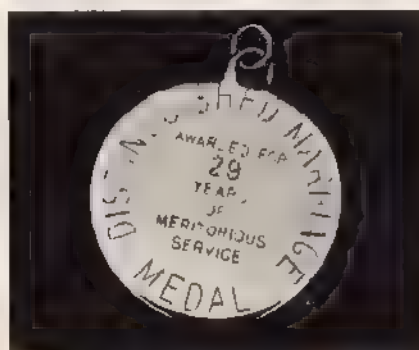
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Soccer

going to do, he may lose sight of his job." Tony Whelan of the Ft. Lauderdale Strikers uses "real tight, physically aggressive marking. I make the guy realize he's not going to have a picnic. I establish my authority that way."

Any stopper worth his elbows keeps a mental checklist of the strengths and weaknesses of the men he must mark. Mike Connell on how to handle Chinaglia: "If the ball's some distance away, say, down at their end of the field, I'll allow Giorgio a couple of yards so that when they play the ball up to him, I can use my quickness to intercept it. If I can't get to it, then I stay a little to his right, making him turn to my right. This way the ball's on his left foot, and I know he's uncomfortable with it there. In the penalty area, I never want him to get the ball on the ground—for a big man, he's very quick over that first yard or so. So I try to stay close and keep between him and the ball. That way, if they're going to get it to him, it's got to be in the air, and heading is one of his weak points."

Heading has got to be a stopper's strong point because a lot of high balls come the stopper's way. He must be good in the air, able to consistently outjump opponents to head the ball away. The master in this department is Seattle's Mike England, a tall, powerful man with immaculate timing and almost perfect heading technique.

Stoppers must be strong, fearless tacklers when the ball is on the ground. The Cosmos possess two of the most biting tacklers in Pino Wilson and Wim Rysbergen. Wilson, a curiously unathletic-looking player, is living proof of all the old sayings about tackling: that it isn't size, strength or technique, but simply determination, that will win the ball.

The sweeper plays a more varied role than the stopper. Lying a yard or two deeper than the other three defenders, he provides cover for all of them, particularly in the penalty area. He is marking space, rather than a man. His skills are very different from the rugged, physical skills of the stopper. Carlos Alberto of the Cosmos plays the sweeper position to perfection, and Ft. Lauderdale's George Best is puzzled: "You know he's not a good tackler, he's not fast, he's not physical, and he can't mark man-to-man. So I keep asking myself why he always ends up with the bloody ball."

The wily Alberto, now 34 years old, knows the answer: "It's experience, positioning and anticipation. Get to the ball first, and you don't have to tackle for it."

Once he has possession of the ball, Alberto's head is up, his teammates' positions are noted and an accurate, intelligent pass is made. The ball is never just



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Soccer

wildly kicked away.

The sweeper position has its more adventurous aspects, as Alberto occasionally displays when he dribbles the ball forward into an attacking position. This was unheard of until the 1960s when Franz Beckenbauer (now a Cosmos' midfielder, then a sweeper with West Germany's Bayern Munich) revolutionized the sweeper's role to include offensive forays.

Beckenbauer was inspired while watching the Italian fullback Giacinto Facchetti, whose sprints forward from his left-back position had made him a dangerous attacker and goal-scorer.

"I saw him play for Italy in 1962," Beckenbauer remembers. "At that time, there was no sweeper, everyone plays man-to-man, everyone sticks to his position. But I see Facchetti, who was playing left-back, going forward. I said to myself, 'This is beautiful soccer, a defender playing like an attacker.'"

Despite Beckenbauer's innovation, the two outside fullbacks are still the most attack-oriented defenders. As defenders, they must of course be strong tacklers and good man-to-man markers. And they must be swift. If the opposing team is

playing with two wingers, the outside fullbacks will mark them, and because wingers are usually the fastest forwards, fullbacks must be the fastest defenders.

The outside backs' opportunities for attacking play are greater than those of the center backs because the space in front of them, each flank of the field, is not as well defended as the middle. And since most teams play with only three forwards, one of the outside fullbacks usually has nobody to mark, and can go forward without "losing" his man.

Time was when it was considered enough for a fullback to race forward out near the touchline (sideline), adding an extra man to the attack. This was the "overlapping" run. Once he got the ball, the fullback would cross it into the goalmouth and beat a quick retreat. Not any more. Modern fullbacks must have a fairly full range of attacking talents—dribbling, exchanging short passes and shooting—so that once they have joined an attack they can finish it off. Nine years ago, a couple of Brazilians who later joined the Cosmos, combined to show just how it should be done . . .

The 1970 World Cup final was down to its last four minutes in Mexico City's Azteca Stadium. With Brazil leading Italy 3-1, the outcome was no longer in doubt. The crowd of 105,000 had taken the Brazilians to heart and was cheering for victory when it was served

one final exquisite moment of soccer.

Jairzinho, Brazil's lithe right winger, took possession of the ball and immediately cut toward the middle of the Italian penalty area. Running with him, dogging him as he had done all afternoon, went the Italian fullback Facchetti. Behind them they left a yawning hole on the left of the Italian defense.

Before it could be filled, the genius of Pelé had struck. Taking a short pass from Jairzinho, he appeared to dither over the ball for a moment, as though struck by a rare moment of indecision. His eyes and head were down, giving no indication of what he was about to do. Then the ball was rolling with all the smoothness of a bowling ball into that invitingly empty area. Thundering up at full speed came right fullback Carlos Alberto, meeting the ball with a ferocious right-footed drive that sent it screaming past the Italian goalkeeper for Brazil's fourth goal. A goal to savor, a modern goal scored by a fullback with a shot worthy of a forward. ■

Next month, in the conclusion of this three-part series, the authors will discuss the skills and tactics of offensive play, and a panel of NASL experts will rate the league's midfielders and forwards.

PAUL GARDNER is the expert commentator on ABC-TV's coverage of the NASL and DAVID HIRSHEY is a staff writer for the New York Sunday News Magazine.



RATING THE DEFENDERS

	BALL SKILLS	HEADING	TACKLING	POSITIONING	QUICKNESS	ANTICIPATION	MARKING	ATTACKING	PASSING	RUGEDNESS	VERSATILITY	CONCENTRATION	STAMINA	WORK RATE	CONSISTENCY	TOTALS
Carlos Alberto (Cosmos)	5	3	3	5	3	5	3	4	4	2	4	5	3	4	5	58
Wim Rijsbergen (Cosmos)	3	4	5	4	4	4	4	2	3	5	2	3	4	4	5	56
Mike Connell (Tampa Bay)	4	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	55
Pino Wilson (Cosmos)	3	4	5	3	3	3	5	2	2	5	3	4	4	4	4	54
Sammy Chapman (Tulsa)	3	4	4	3	3	3	4	4	3	4	3	3	4	4	4	53
Alan Merrick (Minnesota)	3	4	5	4	2	3	4	2	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	53
Graham Oates (Detroit)	3	4	4	4	3	4	4	2	3	4	3	4	3	4	4	53
Laszlo Harsanyi (San Diego)	4	3	3	4	3	4	3	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	4	52
Tony Whelan (Fl. Lauderdale)	3	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	4	4	52
Stewart Jump (Houston)	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	3	51
George Ley (Dallas)	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	4	4	3	4	3	4	3	4	51
Bjorn Nordqvist (Minnesota)	3	4	3	4	3	4	3	2	3	4	3	4	3	3	4	50
Jim Steele (Washington)	3	4	5	3	2	3	3	2	2	5	3	4	4	3	4	50
Mike England (Seattle)	3	5	4	4	2	4	4	2	3	3	2	4	3	3	3	49
Graham Day (Portland)	2	5	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	1	4	3	3	4	48
Bruce Wilson (Chicago)	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	2	3	4	3	4	4	4	3	48
Miralem Fazlic (Rochester)	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	46
Glenn Myernick (Dallas)	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	3	4	4	3	44

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